

AKYEM, c. 1700-1874

A STUDY IN INTER-STATE RELATIONS IN  
PRE-COLONIAL GOLD COAST

Thesis presented to the University  
of London for the Degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy

by

STEPHEN FRED AFFRIFAH

JANUARY 1976.



ProQuest Number: 11010458

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 11010458

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

### ABSTRACT

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century and long after, Bosome led a politically unexciting life. In contrast, the other two Akyem states, Abuakwa and Kotoku, pursued an aggressive foreign policy and tightly guarded their independence against hostile neighbours. Between 1730 and 1742 they acquired imperial domination over the eastern half of the Gold Coast west of the Volta. In 1744, however, Kotoku succumbed to Asante authority. Abuakwa resisted Asante but yielded to that power in 1783. The fall of the Akyem empire increased the area of Asante domination. The Asante yoke proved unbearable; consequently between 1810 and 1831 the Akyem states, as members of an Afro-European alliance, fought a successful war of independence against that power. The European co-operation, however, led to an Anglo-Danish rivalry for Akyem, Akuapem, and Krobo as spheres of influence: the rivalry ended in 1850. Continued threat from Asante and bitter intra-Akyem relations compelled the Akyem states to tolerate British protection. The invasion of Kotoku-Bosome territory by Asante in 1863 underlined the wisdom in remaining under the British canopy. In late 1860s the Kotoku, for example, affirmed their loyalty to the British by helping to re-establish British authority in the Lower Volta District from which it had been withdrawn in 1860. The Kotoku involvement in the Volta conflicts, traditional animosity, and Anglo-Dutch deal over Elmina inspired Asante invasion of Akyem and other parts of the Protectorate in late 1872 and 1873. Close Akyem co-operation enabled the British to counter-attack Asante successfully in 1874. The Akyem also incited

Juaben secession from Asante and promoted the founding of the New Juaben State in Akyem. But the price for all this was the subjection of the Akyem and almost every other Gold Coast people to British colonial rule as from mid-1874.



CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS . . . . . 5

MAPS . . . . . 396-403

PREFACE . . . . . 7 - 9

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 10-16

CHAPTERS:

1. Emergence of Abuakwa and Kotoku to c. 1699 . . . . . 17-42

2. The Search for Supremacy and Security, 1700-1727 . . . . . 43-78

3. Akyem Ascendancy in the South-East, 1728-1742 . . . . . 79-117

4. Abuakwa, Kotoku, and Asante, 1742-1784 . . . . . 118-157

5. Under the Asante Domination, 1785-1831 . . . . . 158-198

6. Akyem, Asante, the British, and the Danes, 1832-1850. 199-223

7. Abuakwa-Kotoku Relations and the British, 1851-1860 . 224-257

8. Impact of Kotoku Presence in Western Akyem, 1860-1867 258-304

9. Dompre of Nsawam, 1867-1871 . . . . . 305-340

10. Akyem, Asante, and the British, 1871-1874 . . . . . 341-362

APPENDICES . . . . . 363-381

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 382-395

ABBREVIATIONS

AAT	: Akyem Abuakwa Traditions.
ABT	: Akyem Bosome Traditions.
AKT	: Akyem Kotoku Traditions.
As-AkT	: Asante-Akyem Traditions.
BMA-PJC	: Basel Mission Archives - Paul Jenkins's Collections.
BGCA	: Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association.
BPP	: British Parliamentary Papers.
CAM	: Committee of African Merchants.
CCC	: Cape Coast Castle.
CCO	: Christiansborg Castle, Osu.
CO	: Colonial Office, London.
DAFG	: Diverse Arkivalier fra Guinea.
DFUA	: Departmenter fur Underigske Anliggender.
EC	: Elmina Castle.
FO	: Foreign Office, London.
GJ	: Guineiske Journaler.
GNQ	: Ghana Notes and Queries.
IAS	: Institute of African Studies, Legon.
JAH	: Journal of African History.
NBKG	: Nederlansche Bezittengen ter Kust van Guinea.
RAC	: The Royal African Company.
SL	: Sierra Leone.
STGJ	: Sager til Guineiske Journaler.
TGCTHS	: Transactions of the Gold Coast & Togoland Historical Society.
THSG	: Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana.
THSN	: Transactions of the Historical Society of Nigeria.
VgK	: Vest-India Kompanie
WIC	: West Indische Compagnie.

MAPS

1. Modern Ghana showing the Akyem district.
2. A Dutch map of the Gold Coast, 1629.
3. Anville's map of the Gold Coast, 1729.
4. Approx. limit of Abuakwa & Kotoku at the beginning of the C18th.
5. Political Expansion of Akyem, 1730-1742.
6. Extent of Akyem after 1831.
7. The Kotoku-Asante War of 1863: Movements of the Asante Army.
8. Nsawam and the Lower Volta District.

## PREFACE

This study examines relations between the Akyem states of Abuakwa, Kotoku, and to a less extent Bosome, on the one hand and their neighbours on the other, as well as intra-Akyem relations, during the period between about 1700 and 1874. The aim is to determine the contribution of the Akyem states to the political evolution of the Gold Coast.

The choice of period is not altogether arbitrary. During the first twenty-seven years of the eighteenth century, Abuakwa and Kotoku for example struggled to preserve their political independence and territorial integrity against, and if possible, achieve political ascendancy over, their neighbours. A successful attack on Akwamu in 1729 swept them into imperial domination over the states and peoples inhabiting the entire area between river Ayensu in the west and the Volta in the east. This ascendancy they enjoyed till 1742: when a defeat by Asante shattered their empire. From then on the main concern of the two Akyem states was to ward off Asante overlordship. By 1744 Kotoku had submitted. Abuakwa followed in 1783. Bosome, nestling in extreme western Akyem, was a political backwater.

Right from the first decade of the nineteenth century, Abuakwa and Kotoku started struggling to recover their independence. But they could only achieve this in 1826 when they allied with other states, the British, and the Danes, to defeat Asante in war. In 1831 a formal peace treaty with Asante endorsed the recovery of independence.

However, the elimination of Asante authority only led to a situation whereby the Akyem states, and several

others, were subjected to greater European political supervision which was converted to colonial rule by the British in July 1874.

I am greatly indebted to a large number of persons who, in diverse ways, helped me in the course of my research: in England the archivists, librarians, and attendants of the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and the Commonwealth Society, all in London; also the officials of the various libraries of the University of London; in Denmark the archivists and other officials of the Royal Archives and the Royal Library in Copenhagen; in Holland all the archivists and officials of the Rijks Archief, The Hague; and in Ghana the officials of the National Archives, and of the libraries of the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast.

My stay in Copenhagen was made most enjoyable by Mr. and Mrs. Bendsten who offered me lodging and boarding; Miss Ingborg Stemann through whom I came to know the Bendtsens; Professor and Mrs. Jeppesen of the University of Copenhagen; and fellow researcher Ole Justesen, who all played host to me from time to time. Ole Justesen was additionally helpful in translating some of the Danish documents for me.

In Holland many Ghanaians there made my stay a happy one, particularly Professor Bamfo-Kwakye, now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, who was then on sabbatical in Eindhoven. Dr. Albert van Danzig of the University of Ghana was most helpful in directing me to some of the Dutch sources. Besides, he put at my disposal some of his own material collected from the

Dutch documents. Mrs. Marion Johnson of the University of Birmingham was also very helpful in directing me to some of the Danish sources.

I also want to thank my cousin, Mr. S. K. Boateng and his family and the Okyenhene, Nana Ofori Atta III who readily came to my aid whenever I was faced with accommodation problem in London. In this respect my townsman Mr. I. E. Offeh Burobey, and my brother-in-law, Mr. Amponsa Abedi and his wife were also helpful.

In many ways I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Professors A. A. Boahen of the University of Ghana, F. Agbodeka and Morton-Williams of the University of Cape Coast: these elderly scholars read the drafts and offered useful advice.

My special and most sincere thanks, however, go to my supervisor, Mr. D. H. Jones, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, for his patient and meticulous supervision.

To the several typists who spared some of their time to help in typing out the drafts and the final thesis I say a big thank you, especially Mr. Paul Mensah and Mrs. V. Williams and her group.

Another special and great gratitude goes to my wife who, besides sharing with me the depressions and occasional joys of a research student, worked, in spite of her own studies, to supplement the financial support I received from the University of Cape Coast.

But for this support and the study leave granted me by the University of Cape Coast this study would have been impossible. To the University I owe a great debt of gratitude.

## INTRODUCTION

By the beginning of the eighteenth century Akyem Abuakwa and Akyem Kotoku had been established as firmly organized inland states for upwards of half a century. Bosome appeared as a third state in Akyem in the first decade of that century. The Akyem were then already well-known to Europeans on the coast.

In 1702 William Bosman, who for several years had been an official at Elmina Castle and was a shrewd observer of the political situation in the Gold Coast, described "the Akims" (Akyem) as the only neighbouring people who did not fear "the haughty, arrogant and warlike "Quamboe" (Akwamu).<sup>1</sup> Akwamu then was a formidable imperial power in the eastern sector of the Gold Coast.<sup>2</sup> Bosman said further that the Denkyera, a people with a "towering pride" in the western sector, were feared by all except the Akyem and Asante.<sup>3</sup>

When Bosman was writing, Asante had already defeated Denkyera, in 1701.<sup>4</sup> The post facto nature of his

1. Bosman, W., A New and Accurate Description of the Gold Coast of Guinea, London 1705, 1967 ed. p. 65.

2. Wilks, I. G., Akwamu, 1650-1750, M.A. Thesis, Bangor 1958 (unpublished); also his article, "The Rise of the Akwemu Empire, 1650-1710", in the Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana (THSG), Vol. III Part 2 (1957), pp. 99-136; and his "The Mossi and Akan States, 1500-1800", in Ajayi, J.F.A. & Crowder, M. (Ed.), History of West Africa, Longmans, 1971, Vol. One, pp.365-9.

3. Bosman, Description, pp. 73 & 77.

4. See Chapter 2, pp. 44 & 65 below.

assertion therefore tends to invalidate his view on Denkyera-Asante relations. But it is significant to note that the Asante defeat of Denkyera generated a series of Akyem-Asante conflicts which did not end till about 1874.

The hostile relations between these two peoples became a major factor in the inter-states politics of the Gold Coast throughout the period under review. Contemporary observers are unanimous on this point. In the eighteenth century the European traders on the coast constantly regretted the prevalence of the conflicts as a hindrance to the smooth flow of trade from the forest to the forts.<sup>1</sup> The situation in the nineteenth century was basically not much different from what it had been in the eighteenth century. George Maclean, president of the British mercantile administration at Cape Coast Castle, emphasized the importance of Akyem-Asante relations in 1831 when he refused to conclude, on behalf of an Afro-European alliance, peace negotiations with Asante unless Akyem leaders were present to assent personally to the peace terms.<sup>2</sup> Horton, a Sierra Leonean medical officer in the service of the British establishment in the Gold Coast, also alluded to the hostile Akyem-Asante relations in 1868 when he described the Akyem as the only people who could challenge, with success, Asante "power when it was in its greatest glory".<sup>3</sup> And in 1871 Salmon, then the Administrator of the

---

1. See Chapters 2, 3 & 4 below.

2. This issue is discussed fully in Chapter 5 below.

3. Horton, J.A.B., West African Countries and Peoples, London 1868, p.126. His other work, Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast, London 1870, is also cited elsewhere in this study.



British possessions in the Gold Coast, made the perceptive comment that "of all the states the Akims are the most allied by kindred to the Ashantees and at the same time the most bitterly hostile to them."<sup>1</sup>

All this clearly points to the Akyem states as an important factor in Gold Coast history, thereby suggesting that the Akyem provide a perspective from which the history of the Gold Coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be discussed profitably. And yet up to the present time this factor has never been considered at any great length in the general histories. Only recently has it been touched upon, in a peripheral manner, in monographic studies of Akwamu, Asante, Akuapem and a few others.<sup>2</sup> Nor has there been any specific attempt to write the history of the Akyem. The nearest one can think of are J. B. Danquah's Akim Abuakwa Handbook, and Akan Laws and Customs: and the Akim Abuakwa Constitution. There is also M. J. Field's Akim Kotoku: An Oman of the Gold Coast. The first of Danquah's two works is nothing more than what it was meant to be, a mere guide book; and the second is just a brief though useful description of the Abuakwa constitution, customs and usages. Field's study on Kotoku is more of anthropology than history. Neither she nor Danquah touches on Bosome either directly or

- 
1. Salmon, C. S., Cape Coast Castle (CCC), to Kennedy, E.A., Sierra Leone (SL), 30th October 1871, CO 96/89, Public Record Office, London.
  2. Wilks, M.A. Thesis; Fynn, J.K., Asante and Its Neighbours, 1700-1807, Northwestern University Press (NUP), 1971; Kwamena-Poh, M.A., Government and Politics in the Akuapem State, 1730-1850 (NUP 1973) Daaku, K.Y., Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720, Oxford University Press (OUP), 1970.

in detail. This study is intended to fill the gap.

Information on the Akyem states in general is not lacking. They were an important centre of the gold digging industry of the Gold Coast. This fact, together with their political ambitions in relation to neighbours, obliged the European traders on the coast to pay considerable attention to them. In their reports to Europe the traders made fairly detailed observations on the Akyem states. European interest in the Akyem country received a new dimension in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the Basel Evangelical Mission Society selected it as a new field, in addition to Ga-Adangme and Akuapem, for evangelisation. The reports of the merchants and the missionaries<sup>1</sup> constitute a rich mine of information on the political, economic, social, and religious life of the Akyem. Also quite informative are the reports of the officials who were occasionally sent on missions to Akyem by the embryonic colonial administration which began to function in the Gold Coast as from 1831.

It must be pointed out, however, that in terms of state and chronology, there is a considerable imbalance in the archival material and the secondary sources. For example documentary evidence on Bosome is virtually nil. Nor does oral tradition provide a satisfactorily detailed and useful alternative source of information on this state.<sup>2</sup> Consequently

- 
1. The Basel Missionary sources used in this study largely derive from Paul Jenkins's Abstracts of the Basel Missionary Correspondence on the Gold Coast. The Abstracts are available in the Balm Library, University of Ghana, Legon. They are referred to in this study as the Basel Mission Archives - Paul Jenkins's Collection (BMA-PJC).
  2. Ward, W.E., on the other hand says that Bosome has a full tradition, cf. A History of Ghana, London, 1957, ed. p. 111. There is not much in this work to justify Ward's view.

Bosome has not received as full treatment as Abuakwa and Kotoku. On the whole this state has been treated as an appendage of Kotoku with which it was sometimes closely connected, on grounds of abusua (clan) ties: the relationship came into greater focus during the nineteenth century. Documentary evidence on Abuakwa and Kotoku is quite satisfactory, but even here there is some regrettable deficiency. For instance information on Kotoku during the period between 1742 and 1812 leaves much to be desired. Nothing of note seems to have happened in that state during that long period to draw the attention of the European traders on the coast. In contrast, there is ample material on Abuakwa, because the traders on the coast were obliged to follow, with anxiety, its bitter conflicts with Asante, since the confrontations affected the forest-to-fort trade. But in the 1860s documentation is more prolific on Kotoku than Abuakwa, owing to the former's conflicts with Asante. On the whole, however, evidence from the written sources is sufficient to warrant a reliable reconstruction of the history of relations between the Akyem states and their neighbours.

Where the documents are not so helpful is in the matter of the origins and early history of the states. In this respect one has had to rely on oral tradition as the only alternative source of information. Otherwise tradition has been used sparingly. This is not due to one's distrust of tradition as lacking worthy evidential value. Truth is either deliberately and easily distorted to suit the interest of the narrator<sup>1</sup> or inadvertently glossed over.

---

1. Akinjogbin, I. A., Dahomey and Its Neighbours, 1708-1818 (OUP) 1966, p. 4.

The traditions of the Akyem Abuakwa provide a good illustration of this point. Under the patronage of Okyenhene Nanq Ofori Atta I (1912-1943), the Divisional and other sub-chiefs of the Abuakwa state committed the histories of their stools<sup>1</sup> to writing during the 1925-6 period.<sup>2</sup> The existence of this corpus should place the researcher in Abuakwa in a better position than his counterparts elsewhere in Ghana or other parts of West Africa. But as is well known to specialists on oral history, traditions which crystalize under the patronage of progressive traditional rulers, like Ofori Atta I, tend to be distorted in ways which are extremely difficult to detect.

The Akyem Abuakwa are not positively known to have buried the unsavoury aspects of their past, as the Asante for instance are said to have done,<sup>3</sup> but sometimes certain assertions in their traditions point to efforts to distort or sheer ignorance. A case in point is the traditional view of Ofori Panin, one of their rulers. Many of the stools histories (there are at least more than twenty of them) claim that Ofori Panin led the Abuakwa from Adanse to settle in Akyem where he founded the Akyem Abuakwa state. All the traditions speak of only one Ofori. Therefore it seems reasonable to identify him with the Ofori whose reign European documentary sources

- 
1. Among certain sections of Ghanaians, especially the Akan, the stool is the equivalent of throne; others have skin, for example chiefs in the Northern and Upper Regions.
  2. The histories are available at the Palace, Kyebi. They are referred to in this study as Akyem Abuakwa Traditions: Kyebi, or as the case may be (AAT: Kyebi etc.), 1925-6.
  3. Ward, History, pp. 62 & 140-141.

would date to about the 1704-1727 period.<sup>1</sup> At least circumstantial evidence from the European sources would also suggest that the migration spoken of in the traditions may have taken place in the middle years of the seventeenth century or even earlier.<sup>2</sup> Therefore unless the documents are assumed to be wrong, tradition would seem to be telescoped in the matter of the migration from Adanse.<sup>3</sup> There is thus the need for circumspection in the use of the Abuakwa traditional histories. Indeed this caution has been applied to the oral traditions of the other two Akyem states as well as those of the non-Akyem peoples consulted. For they all have their own bias.

Where possible I have relied more on documentary than traditional evidence. This is in no way to suggest that the written sources cannot be wrong. One is here more concerned about the degree of distortion. Though occasionally partisan in their local relations, the European traders were generally objective in their reports. Moreover, they provide the contemporary dating which enables the construction of a chronological framework that may be accepted with confidence.

---

1. See Chapter 2, below.

2. Cf. Chapter 1, pp.22-24 below.

3. This subject is discussed fully in Chapter 1 below.

## CHAPTER 1

### EMERGENCE OF ABUAKWA AND KOTOKU TO c.1699

Hostility generally marked relations between the Akyem states and their neighbours during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The beginnings of the phenomenon, however, can be traced to at least the middle years of the seventeenth century when migrant lineages of the Asona and Agona mmusua (clans) from Adanse arrived in Akyem and succeeded in imposing themselves as rulers on the existing societies in the southern and northern sections of the district. From that time onwards the political and economic ambitions of the Asona rulers of Abuakwa<sup>1</sup> and the Agona chiefs of Kotoku, as the two sections of Akyem generally came to be known, made it impossible for peaceful relations to prevail between the Akyem and most of their neighbours, especially those who were not prepared to promote Akyem interests.

The Akyem district today consists of roughly the south-western third of the Eastern Region of Ghana.<sup>2</sup> In area it is a little over seven thousand square miles. It is a characteristically hilly country. The highest point, which is about 2420 feet above sea-level, occurs on the

---

1. There is the assertion that Akyem Abuakwa, Akyem Kotoku, and Akuapem were all under rulers of the Agona abusua. Cf. Wilks, in Ajayi & Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. One p. 369. This is quite misleading. While it is true that the rulers of Kotoku were, and are still, of the Agona abusua, these of Abuakwa and Akuapem, since the seventeenth century, have always been of the Asona clan.

2. See Map. No. 1, p. 396

Atewa-Atwiredu hill range. This thirty-mile range runs south-westwards from the Birem gap in the north to the Akanten-Osenase neighbourhood in the south. The gap, created by the river Birem (often spelt Birim or Birrim), separates the range from the so-called Kwawu mountains.<sup>1</sup> About thirty-five miles to the south of the Atewa-Atwiredu is the Nyanao hill or Akyem peak.

Many rivers and rivulets drain the district. Among these are the Ayensu, Densu, Akrum, Pompom (often spelt Pawnpawn), and the Birem. The last named river is the biggest and longest of them all. It rises from the Atewa near the town of Apapam in eastern Akyem and initially flows north-eastwards to create the gap to which we have already referred. After its loop round the northern tip of the Atewa, the river, at the town of Anyinam, turns to flow south-westwards till it joins the river Pra about seventy miles away in the Assin district, only a few miles west of Akyem Soaduro.

Available evidence shows that the size of the Akyem district today is considerably different from what it was at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The extent and political divisions of the district defied European attempts to define them during the seventeenth and subsequent centuries, owing to lack of reliable information.<sup>2</sup> But a

- 
1. The Kwawu mountains are actually a hill range of about one hundred and seventy miles long. It starts from Kintampo in the Brong Ahafo Region and runs south-eastwards through Ashanti Region to the New Juaben and Akuapem districts in the Eastern Region. The range is referred to as Kwawu mountains probably because of the picturesque scarps which it shows in the Kwawu area.
  2. Bosman, Description, p. 78; cf. also Barbot, J., "A Description of the Gold Coast of the North & South Guinea", in Churchill, Collection of Voyages and Travels (London 1732), Vol. 5, p. 184. Barbot wrote in the 1680s.

correlation between oral traditional evidence and information from a map of the Gold Coast drawn by the Dutch in 1629,<sup>1</sup> as well as other European sources, makes it possible to define, with a considerable degree of accuracy, the size and political divisions of the district during the second half of the seventeenth century.

The 1629 Dutch map of the Gold Coast delineates "Akim" or "Great Acanij" as one of the biggest inland districts or states in the seventeenth century. Among its immediate neighbours were Agona to the south; Akwamu to the south-east and east; "Little Acanij" (?Assin) to the west; Kwawu (or Kwahu) to the north-east; and "Akan" to the north. A hundred years later another European map of the Gold Coast defined "Akim" almost in similar terms.<sup>2</sup> In between the two dates there were several references to the district or its people. In 1660 Villaut mentioned "Acanis le Grand",<sup>3</sup> and in the 1670s Heerman Abramsz referred to the "Akimse Akannists" who lived "behind Craa" [Accra].<sup>4</sup> Until 1730 when they migrated to the trans-Volta area,<sup>5</sup> the Akwamu lived between

- 
1. Chart 743, dated 25 December 1629, The Leupen Collection, in Rijks Archief, The Hague. The Chart is reproduced in this study as Map No. 2, p. 397
  2. Anville, M.D., "A map of the Gold Coast from Issini to Alampi", April 1729. It is reproduced as Map No. 3 on p. in this study.
  3. Nicolas Villaut, "A relation of the coast of Africa called Guinea" (Trs. 2nd ed. London 1670), cited by A. A. Boahen, "Arcany or Accany or Arcania and the Accanists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' European records", in THSG Vol. XIV Part 1 pp. 100-112.
  4. Heerman Abramsz to Assembly of Ten, 23 November 1679, in Albert van Danzig, Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast, 1680-1710 (Legon) p. 5.
  5. See Chapters 2 and 3 below.



the Akyem Abuakwa and the Ga (Accra). It is therefore reasonable to identify "Akim", Great Acanij or Acanis le Grand, or "Akim Akanny" (implied by Abramsz) with Akyem Abuakwa.<sup>1</sup> Akyem Abuakwa of the seventeenth century, in broad terms, consisted of the territory between the Pra and its tributary the Birem, plus the strip of territory between the Birem and the Atewa-Atwiredu hill range.<sup>2</sup>

This was not all the Akyem country. The evidence from Kotoku traditions, recorded since the 1840s down to the present, shows that the Kotoku, or at least the ruling lineage, inhabited the district which is now known as Asante-Akyem from about the middle years of the seventeenth century up to the early 1820s when they migrated to Akyem south of the Birem.<sup>3</sup> This district was immediately to the north of

---

1. Cf. also Boahen, THSG Vol. XIV Part 1 p. 106.

2. This conclusion contradicts the view that seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries "Akwamu extended beyond the Atewa", Cf. Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710", in THSG Vol. III Part 2 (1957) pp. 99-100. Our contention here derives further strength from the fact that Wilks has recently had to change some of his views on the beginnings of Akwamu. Cf. Ajayi & Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. One pp. 364-367.

3. Guineiske Journaler (GJ): 1800-1844, entries No. 329 dated 18 December 1842 and No. 367 dated 10 February 1843, Royal Archives, Copenhagen; Simon Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, II March 1859 (BMA-PJC); "Petition of Quabina Fuah, King of Nsuaem (i.e. Oda today) to the Governor (CCC), 17 July 1871, CO 96/88; Precise of Akim Claims to Ashanti-Akim: Kotoku, MP 212/93, MP 5718/94, Confidential MP 105/96, MP 559/96, MP 6974/96, MP 8661/97, MP 4964/98, MP 1588/00, MP 1206/01; Ag. Colonial Secretary (Accra) to the Chief Commissioner (Kumasi), 2 June 1908, all in File No. D 46, Kumasi Archives; Willcocks (Fumso-Ashanti) to Chamberlain (London), 4 July 1900, CO 96/374; Governor Hodgson (Accra) to Chamberlain, 17 July 1900, CO 96/361; K. Ameyaw, Akim Oda (Kotoku) Tradition, IAS acc. No. KAG/7, Institute of African Studies, Legon; Akyem Kotoku Traditions (AKT): Awisa, as told present author by Awisahene and Elders (1968). The migration to Akyem south of the Birem is discussed in Chapter 5 below.

'Akim'. The 1629 Dutch map called the district immediately to north of "Akim" Akan, while the 1729 map named it Akam. It thus stands to reason to identify Akan or Akam with Akyem Kotoku, i.e. present-day Asante-Akyem. That this district formed part of Akyem is further substantiated by Asante tradition which says that the name "Asante-Akyem" was given to the district by Asantehene Opoku Ware I (c1717-1750) after he had conquered it.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to observe that in 1679 Herman Abramsz spoke of the "Cocoriteese Accanists" who lived in "the interior north of Cormantyn" by which he of course meant Fante.<sup>2</sup> 'Cocoriteese' is clearly a corruption of 'Kotokus' who were also known as the 'Kwadukros',<sup>3</sup> during their Asante-Akyem days. Heerman Abramsz's description is fairly accurate because only the Assin lived between the Kotoku and the Fante. Seventeenth century Akyem Kotoku, according to tradition, broadly consisted of the territory between the Pra and its third largest tributary, the Anuru (often written Anum).

The ruling houses of both Abuakwa and Kotoku do not claim to be aboriginal inhabitants of Akyem: their ancestors, they allege, migrated from Adanse, now part of Asante, to Akyem.<sup>4</sup> The claim is essentially confirmed by

- 
1. Precis of Akim Claims: Abuakwa, Conf. 345/00, 1900, paragraph 6, File No. D.46, Kumasi Archives.
  2. Van Danzig, Dutch Documents p. 5.
  3. Daaku, cited by Boahen, THSG. Vol. XIV Part (i) p. 106.
  4. Reindorf, History p. 61. AAT: Kukurantumi, Begoro, Kwaben, Wankyi, Pamen etc. (1925/6), and Kyebi (1968/9); Danquah J.B., Akan Laws p. 2-3. Abuakwa Tradition, as-recorded by E. L. Meyerowitz, Akan Traditions of Origin (1950) p. 91; Ward, History, pp. 109-110.

Akwamu, Asante and Akuapem traditions.<sup>1</sup>

The traditions do not say when the migrants from Adanse arrived in Akyem. There have been three attempts so far to date the event. Reindorf writing in the late nineteenth century says that the migration from Adanse "began at a remote period and still continues."<sup>2</sup> How long ago is what he does not explain. Danquah in 1928 implied that the Abuakwa were already in Akyem before 1660.<sup>3</sup> In contrast Akuffo thinks that the migration occurred in 1660.<sup>4</sup> Developments in Adanse indicate that both Danquah and Akuffo are fairly close to the truth.

The heartland of Adanse today is on the Twisa hills in southern Asante. Among its leading towns are Fomena, Dompooase, Akrokyere (Akorokerri) and the gold mining town of Abuasi. In the seventeenth century, however, the Adanse seem to have inhabited the territory between the river Ofin and its tributary, the Oda. Adanse thus formed part of the Ofin basin, which, by A.D. 1500, had been divided into important centres of "Akan culture and statedom".<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it is in this sense that one must understand Adanse to which place the ruling lineages of

---

1. Akwamu Tradition, as recorded by Field, M. J. Akim Kotoku, pp. 2-3; Akuffo, B.S., Ahemfie Adesua (Exeter 1950) pp. vii-viii. Dompooase Tradition, as recorded by K. Y. Daaku, Oral Traditions of Adanse, esp. p. 5.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 61.

3. Danquah, Akan Laws, p. 2.

4. Akuffo, Ahemfi, p. viii.

5. J.D. Fage, A History of West Africa (CUP, 1969 ed.) p. 40.

several Akan states trace their immediate origins: for example Agona, Denkyera, sections of the Fante, Kwawu (or Kwahu), Twifo, Wassa, and above all Abuakwa as well as Kotoku.

The Abrade rulers of Akwamu also once formed part of the royal lineage of Twifo, one of the Ofin basin states, but they emigrated from the area because of struggle for power.<sup>1</sup> By the second half of the seventeenth century the secessionist Abrade from Twifo had built for themselves an empire embracing what is now the Eastern Region of Ghana and parts of the Lower trans-Volta region.<sup>2</sup>

The power struggle which brought about the withdrawal of the Akwamu rulers of the Abrade abusua from Twifo must have formed part of a general rivalry for predominance in the Ofin basin. By the first half of the seventeenth century Adanse appears to have achieved supremacy over its rivals. Adanse, says Reindorf, achieved its hegemony through diplomacy and intimidation by means of its god Bona.<sup>3</sup> But military conquest seems to have been another and perhaps the most effective means. The rise of Denkyera, to which the fall of Adanse is attributed, suggests this.<sup>4</sup>

In 1659 the Dutch on the coast reported of wars

- 
1. I. Wilks, "A Note on Akwamu and Twifo" in THSG. Vol. III Part (III), (1958) p. 217.
  2. Wilks, Akwamu, 1650-1750, M.A. Thesis, Bangor 1958 (unpublished); also article in THSG Vol. III Part ii (1957) pp. 99-136.
  3. Reindorf, History, pp. 48-9.
  4. Reindorf, History, p. 49; J. K. Kumah, The Rise and Fall of Denkyera, M.A. Thesis, Legon 1965 (Unpublished); Kumah, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Denkyera", in Ghana Notes and Queries (GNQ) No. 9, 1966 pp. 33-35.

in "distant Adansee", adding that Adanse had "disappeared" i.e. had been defeated as a result of the wars.<sup>1</sup> The conqueror of Adanse was Denkyera.<sup>2</sup>

The wars in Adanse and the subsequent rise of Denkyera would seem to have had a far reaching effect on the hinterland of the Gold Coast, especially the Akyem district. Many lineages and groups of lineages were compelled to leave the Ofin basin in order to seek peace and security elsewhere by putting distance between them and the rising power of Denkyera. Among these were the Adanse themselves who decided to seek asylum on the mountain fastness of Twisa after a sojourn in Akyem.<sup>3</sup> Others were the royal Asona abusua of Kokobiante<sup>4</sup> and the royal Agona clan of Atoam in Twifo.<sup>5</sup>

Reindorf, apparently relying on tradition, ascribes the migration of the Agona abusua of Atoam from the Ofin area to Denkyera tyranny. On the death of Obenempon Akrofi, King of Atoam, he writes, the Denkyerahene demanded from Asiedu Apenten, successor to the Atoam stool, part of the estate of Akrofi. The demand would suggest Denkyera

---

1. Valckenburg's Report, September 1659, cited by Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 156.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 49; Kumah M.A. Thesis and in GNQ No. 9 p. 35.

3. K.Y. Daaku, Oral Traditions of Adanse; Ward, History, p. 54.

4. Meyerowitz, Akan Traditions p. 91; Akwamu Tradition, in Field, Akim-Kotoku p. 2.

5. Reindorf, History, p. 49. Reindorf renders Twifo 'Tshuforo'.

suzerainty over Atoam.<sup>1</sup> Apenten refused to oblige, an indication of Atoam unpreparedness to recognize the Denkyerahene as an overlord. In the war which ensued Asiedu was killed. To avoid a fate similar to Asiedu's, but apparently still refusing to comply with the Denkyera request, Ofosuhene Apenten, who succeeded to the Atoam stool, and his subjects emigrated altogether from Twifo. The Atoam emigrants "wandered to different places" including Ahuren near Lake Bosomtwe in present-day Asante till they eventually "settled in the Akyem country with the name of Akyem Kotoku."<sup>2</sup> The Kotoku settled in northern Akyem i.e. present day Asante-Akyem.<sup>3</sup>

A similar inability to tolerate the Denkyera domination would seem to have compelled the royal Asona clan of Kokobiante to leave Adanse. For Akwamu tradition, recorded by Margaret Field, relates that "the chief of Kokobiante, a stool in Adanse serving Denchera, is said to have offended against the Dencherahene and, to escape the penalty, fled with a handful of his followers to Nyanao where he threw himself on the protection of the King of Akwamu." The Akwamuhene then advised the Kokobiante migrants to go to his "hunters in the Birrim district (the Atwia of Asamankese and Kyibi)" who had plenty of land to spare.

---

1. Cf. the custom of Ayibuade. This custom which seems to have been universal among the Akan states, entitled an overlord to a portion or the whole of the estate of a deceased vassal or subject. The custom also applied in master-slave relations. Cf. Rattray, R.S. Ashanti Law and Constitution (OUP, 1929) Chapter XIV.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 49.

3. Reindorf, History, p. 65.

Thus it was that the Kokobiante stool was set up in Akyem and though "it became the paramount stool of Akim-Abuakwa Oman, it did not own the land it settled upon."<sup>1</sup>

The migration does not appear to have taken place en masse, in one great sweep, but in petty and perhaps uncoordinated waves.<sup>2</sup> For several other lineages of Asona and non-Asona abusua<sup>3</sup> from Adanse claim to have joined the Kokobiante later. An example is the Asona abusua of Anyinabirem, also in the Ofin basin, who were eventually to found Kukurantumi and become the headquarters of the Adonten division of the Akyem Abuakwa state.<sup>4</sup>

Who the leaders of the Kokobiante and Atoam migrations were it is not easy to establish with certainty. As already indicated, Ofosuhene Apenten is said to have led the Atoam migrants<sup>5</sup> while Ofori Panin is supposed to have been the leader of the Kokobiante.<sup>6</sup> These assertions seem doubtful, especially in the case of Ofori Panin. Virtually all Abuakwa stools traditions, as pointed out in the Introduction, know of one Ofori (Panin) who is given the dual credit as leader of the Kokobiante migration from

1. Field, Akim-Kotoku, pp. 2-3.

2. Ward, History, p. 109.

3. There are seven major and seven minor mmusua (clans) among the Akan. Every Akan is supposed to belong to one of these clans.

4. AAT: Kukurantumi (1925/6).

5. Reindorf, History, p. 49.

6. AAT: Kukurantumi, Begoro, Wankyi, Pamen etc. (1925/6), Kyebi (1968/9).

Adanse and founder of the Akyem Abuakwa state.<sup>1</sup> Normally the term 'Panin', meaning the First, would imply a later Ofori or more than one Ofori who ascended the Abuakwa stool.<sup>2</sup> On this occasion however, the term is used to distinguish Ofori Panin from Ofori Kuma, i.e. Ofori the Younger, an Akyem Abuakwa sub-chief of the Asona clan who was the founder of the dynasty which still rules in Akuapem.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore reasonable to identify Ofori Panin of tradition with the historical Ofori whose reign is fixed by European sources to the period between about 1704 and 1727.<sup>4</sup> For unless Ofori had a reign of more than sixty years, which is highly improbable,<sup>5</sup> he cannot be said to have also led the Kokobiante migration from Adanse which seems to have taken place in the 1650s or earlier. It is possible that the leader was another and an earlier Ofori whom tradition has forgotten, or even a leader of a different name who has been deprived of the credit. For the evidence is clear that Ofori of the European records sought to make Abuakwa great by pursuing an aggressive foreign policy.<sup>6</sup> His aggression also

---

1. AAT: Kukurantum, Begoro, Wankyi, Pamen etc. (1925/6), Kyebi (1968/9).

2. The Akan have stool instead of throne.

3. See Chapter 3 pp. 86-89 below.

4. Cf. Chapter 2 below.

5. Using 'sample' states, of which Abuakwa is one, D.H. Jones has arrived at thirteen (13) years as the average length of reigns in Ghana monarchical systems up to the nineteenth century. Cf. "Problems of African Chronology" in Journal of African History (J.A.H.) Vol. XI No. 2 (1970) pp. 161-179.

6. This subject is fully discussed in Chapter 2 below.



suggests the achievement of a considerable internal stability (consolidation of the authority of the paramount Asona abusua). This achievement probably explains why he is falsely regarded as having led the Abuakwa migration from Adanse and is also acclaimed founder of the Abuakwa state. It is not uncommon for tradition to eulogise, out of proportion, the achievements of whoever it is in its own interest to consider as a hero. Reindorf in fact implies at one point that the leader of the Kokobiante migration was Kuntunkurunku, though he eventually contradicts himself by saying that Kuntunkrunku was the first of the twelve Abuakwa rulers to have reigned during their Adanse days.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly if Ofosuhene Apenten of tradition is identified with the Apenten of the European sources,<sup>2</sup> then he cannot have led the Atoam migration to Akyem. Of course it is possible that Apenten of the records is quite different from Ofosuhene Apenten of tradition. But an Asante tradition recalls an Akyem Kotokuhene called 'Fusu Apenten' - perhaps the same as Ofosuhene Apenten - whom the Asante killed in a war against Kotoku.<sup>3</sup> This may well be a reference to Apenten who, according to documentary evidence, lost his life in a war with Asante in 1717.<sup>4</sup> It seems reasonable therefore to reject Reindorf's view, already

---

1. Reindorf, History, pp. 61 & 348. Kuntunkrunku (spelt Kutukrunku by Reindorf on p. 61 but more correctly on p. 348) is further discussed on p. 33 below.

2. Cf. Chapter 2, pp. 45-46 below.

3. Tradition of Asumegya, in R. S. Rattray, Ashanti Law and Constitution (OUP 1929) p. 132.

4. See Chapter 2, pp. 46 & 68 below for a full account of this war.

referred to above, that Ofosuhene led the Atoam migration to Akyem. The credit must be given to one of his predecessors, of whom at least four are remembered.<sup>1</sup> But our present knowledge makes it difficult to arrive at any positive assertion on this point.

Reindorf, apparently using tradition, says that it was in northern Akyem (i.e. present day Asante-Akyem) that the migrant Agona abusua from Atoam adopted the name Kotoku.<sup>2</sup> He may well be right, for a more recent version of Kotoku tradition asserts that the Atoam, after leaving Ahuren in the lacustrine district around Bosomtwe, directed their course to Bomfa in present day Asante Akyem, but later moved on to settle at a place very close to Dwansa on the Konongo-Agogo road.<sup>3</sup> Here they adopted the name 'Kotokuom' - now corrupted to Kotoku - in view of the relative isolatedness of the place.<sup>4</sup> Soon they became the dominant authority in the area.

The Kokobiante or Abuakwa migrants, after reaching southern Akyem, settled at Banso, just to the north of the Atewa.<sup>5</sup> Eventually Banso became the capital of the Akyem Abuakwa state that subsequently emerged. Banso is no longer

---

1. Ameyaw, Akim Oda (Kotoku) Tradition.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 49.

3. Ameyaw, Oda Tradition.

4. Ameyaw, Oda (Kotoku) Tradition. But yet another version says the Kotoku were fond of carrying 'Kotoku' (sack or satchel) about them; neighbours therefore referred to them as the 'Kotoku' people.

5. AAT: Kyebi (1968/9); AAT: Banso (1925/6).

the capital of Abuakwa. In or about the 1780s the capital was removed to Kyebi.<sup>1</sup> But that Bansa must have once been the Abuakwa capital is substantiated, though not perhaps conclusively, by the fact that it still serves as the place where the remains of deceased Abuakwa Kings are finally buried.

Lack of detailed and reliable evidence makes it impossible, to show how the invaders from the Ofin basin succeeded in subjugating the Akyem country in order to impose their authority on the existing societies there. There is enough, however, to enable us to speculate as to why the "invaders" were successful. Fragmentation of the existing society appears to have helped the Adanse invaders. Akyem societies before the arrival of the migrants from Adanse or Ofin basin, appear to have been made up partly of patrilineal Guan communities, and partly of matrilineal Akan groups. The Guan communities were probably the earliest inhabitants of the district. Ward writes: "The tradition of Agogo in Ashanti-Akim relates that when the first settlers established their home there they had to fight against a powerful ruler called Otara Fuom or Otara Finam" whose name is identified as Guan.<sup>2</sup> Certain Guan Kyerepon of Akuapem recall that their ancestors once lived in parts of what is now the Akyem Abuakwa district.<sup>3</sup> These Guans probably lived under petty political authorities. For in Akuapem they lived in very

---

1. The change is fully discussed in Chapter 5 below.

2. Ward, History, p. 39.

3. Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, p. 125.

small chiefdoms until 1730s when the Akyem Abuakwa organized them into a unitary state.<sup>1</sup> The other element in Akyem communities was that of the matrilineal Akan who had arrived in Akyem long before the Abuakwa and Kotoku rulers, but later than the Guan.<sup>2</sup> Together the two ethnic groups seem to have been militarily weak because they lived in fragmentary communities. Asante-Akyem traditions lay stress on the fragmentation of society in the area, which enabled 'Frimpon Manso'<sup>3</sup> i.e. the invaders from Atoam (Kotoku) to defeat and 'enslave' them.<sup>4</sup> This description seems to tie in well with the Dutch view in 1629 that the 'Akims' were a very delicate people.<sup>5</sup> Delicate here probably means weak, especially when the 'Akim' are considered in relation to neighbours like the Agona who were prone to war, the Akwamu a "thievish people", and the Kwawu who were said to be a rascal people.<sup>6</sup> The Akyem may have been an object of constant harassment for such powerful neighbours. The same weakness may have partly enabled the 'Adanse' invaders to subjugate

---

1. Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 86-88 below.

2. Ward, History, p. 39.

3. Frimpon Manso was a Kotoku King from 1717-1741. Cf. Chapter 2 pp. 76-78 and Chapter 3 pp. 79-112 below.

4. Asante-Akyem Traditions (AS-AKT): Bompata & Juansa, recorded by the present author in 1968/9. My informants were for Bompata, Opanin Tieku, son of a late nineteenth century Bompatahene, and for Dwansa, the head of the Oyoko abusua. Tieku was alleged to be about eighty years old then.

5. Chart 743.

6. Ibid.

the Akyem country.

But the relative homogeneity of the invaders appear to have been a contributory factor. This was especially the case with the invaders who eventually founded the Akyem Abuakwa state. Several of the migrant lineages were of the Asona abusua. Besides the Kokobiante the lineages who founded Takyiman (and later moved to Kukurantumi), Begoro, Kwaben, Wankyi were all of the Asona clan; they all, or most of them, reportedly migrated from Adanse. In Akyem they joined the Bansa (later Kyebi) King to subjugate the country. Kukurantumi tradition relates that the nucleus of the Abuakwa state was formed by an alliance between the Kokobiante and Anyinabirem migrant Asona lineages from Adanse.<sup>1</sup> In due course, other entrants were admitted into the union. Eventually, besides the paramount rulers of Abuakwa, four out of the five divisional heads in the Abuakwa state which subsequently emerged were of the Asona abusua. These were Kukurantumihene, alias Adontenhene of Abuakwa, Begorohene, otherwise called Benkumhene, Kwabenhene or Gyasehene, and Wankyihene or Oseawuhene.<sup>2</sup> The preponderance of the Asona element in the high echelon of the state in more recent times seems to be a pointer to and proof of the use which the invaders made of their Asona homogeneity for concerted action in subduing the Akyem country in the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. AAT: Kukurantumi and also Wankyi (1925/6).

2. Only the Mifahene, alias Asiakwahene, was, and still is, of the Oyoko clan.

3. Compare with the achievement of the Oyoko abusua in Asante. Cf. A. A. Boahen, Topics in West African History (Longmans) p. 70 and in Ajayi & Espie, A Thousand Years of West African History, p. 168.

The immigrants from Adanse also seem to have gained support from some of the Akan communities already existing in the area. Ward, apparently relying on tradition, relates that before the arrival of the Adanse immigrants there was "a nucleus of Akim settlers under a certain Kuntunkrunku," but that Ofori Panin, i.e. the leader of the Adanse immigrants, owing to his wisdom as a judge, was "chosen to succeed Kuntunkrunku as head of the growing Akim contingent."<sup>1</sup>

When then did the migrants from Adanse arrive in Akyem? Valckenburg's dating of the fall of Adanse, and the unanimity of the traditions in ascribing the fall to the rise of Denkyera<sup>2</sup> give considerable substance to the suggestion, implied by Danquah and Akuffo, that the middle years of the seventeenth century probably saw the arrival of the Adanse migrants in Akyem. That the 'Adanse' migrants arrived in Akyem during the middle years of the seventeenth century is further substantiated by an economic revolution which seems to have taken place in Akyem during the second half of that century. In 1629 the Dutch described the Akyem as very rich in slaves.<sup>3</sup> The assertion is capable of two possible interpretations. Either the Akyem were owners of large numbers of slaves, or they themselves constituted a prolific source of slaves. The latter view may well have been the case, considering that the Akyem had powerful

---

1. Ward, History, pp. 109-110.

2. See p. 28 above.

3. Chart 743.

neighbours, e.g. Akwamu, Agona and Kwawu who could subject them to slavery. The same source mentioned some of the districts or states of the Gold Coast as gold-producing, but did not find it justifiable to include the Akyem country. This suggests that Akyem either had no gold at all or that its production was too insignificant to warrant mentioning.<sup>1</sup> By the 1660s, however, southern Akyem at least, had become both a slave and gold producer.<sup>2</sup> In the 1680s Akyem was better known as a source of gold.<sup>3</sup> By the turn of the century, Akyem, Bosman says, was producing "as large quantities of gold as any that I know; and that also the most valuable and pure of any that is carried from this coast ..."<sup>4</sup> It is clear from these sources that an economic revolution had occurred in Akyem. This revolution had brought about a change from a slave-based economy in the first half of the century to one buttressed by gold in the second half.

It is pertinent to inquire into the causes of the revolution. Such causes may have been internal or external or both. There is reason to believe that they were more from outside than from inside, and had something to do with the arrival of the invaders from the Ofin basin.

- 
1. Archaeological evidence suggests that alluvial gold in the Birem basin was already being exploited by the inhabitants there before the arrival of Europeans. Cf. Paul Ozanne in Peter Shinnie (ed.) The African Iron Age, Oxford 1971, p. 49.
  2. O. Dapper, in Ogilby, Collection, p. 441. It is possible, however, that Dapper obtained his information from earlier works, as he never visited the West African coast. But one cannot be absolutely sure of this.
  3. Barbot, in Churchill, Collection, pp. 182 & 189-190.
  4. Bosman, Description, p. 78.

As to be expected, the immigrants had brought with them that gold-digging skill for which Adanse had already become well known by the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> The intensification of the gold-digging industry by the Adanse migrants probably explains the orientation of Akyem from a slave-exporting economy to one based on the extractive industry. By the eighteenth century the revolution had become so complete that during that period as well as in the nineteenth century the name Akyem was virtually synonymous with gold.<sup>2</sup>

The possession of gold strengthened the position of the Akyem states in their relations with some of their close neighbours. Akwamu, for example, was inclined to appeal to the Akyem for financial help. From the 1670s Akwamu embarked upon an expansionist programme to the south and south-eastern Gold Coast.<sup>3</sup> By 1699 she had subdued the Ga and had emerged as a coast power. Initially Akyem (Abuakwa) tried to associate itself with the Akwamu expansion. For in 1677 the Akyem are said to have given

---

1. Fage, West Africa, p. 40, Daaku, Trade & Politics pp. 145-146.

2. Bosman, op. cit., p. 78, L. F. Romer, Tilforladlig Efterretning om Kysten Guinea (Copenhagen, 1760) p. 164; Atlas Maritime de l'Asie et de l'Afrique No. 104 (Paris 1764) cited by G. Macdonald, The Gold Coast Past and Present (London 1898) p. 121 Major W. F. Butler, one of the leaders of the British invasion of Asante in 1874, is quoted as saying that in Akyem gold was as plentiful as potatoes were in Ireland. Cf. H. Brackenbury, The Ashanti War, A Narrative (London 1874) Vol. II p. 357.

3. I. G. Wilks M.A. Thesis, Chapters 1 & 2; also his article, "The Rise of Akwamu, 1650-1710," in THSG Vol. III Part 2 (1957) pp. 99-136.



Akwamuhene Ansa Sasraku a loan to purchase arms in his war against the Ga.<sup>1</sup> From the Akyem viewpoint, this was a sound diplomatic move, at once aimed at political and economic gains. The move would give the Abuakwa leaders, as recent immigrants, a free hand to pursue the policy of conquering, and consolidating themselves in, the Akyem country. At the same time the loan would be expected to influence Akwamu leaders to give Akyem traders free passage to and from the coast. The second objective may have been uppermost in the minds of the Akyem leaders since by the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the coast trade had become particularly attractive to the inland states and peoples.<sup>2</sup>

The alliance with Akwamu was, however, shortlived. By 1689 Akyem (Abuakwa) was more inclined towards an alliance with Agona, also to the south, against Akwamu. What brought about the shift in alliance is not altogether clear. It is likely that Akyem had become disappointed and frustrated in its expectations from Akwamu, especially in the matter of free passage for Akyem traders plying to and from the trade on the Ga coast via Akwamu. For by the end of the century blocking the routes against Akyem had become a habit of Akwamu.<sup>3</sup> Apparently Akwamu did not find the Akyem-Agona Alliance in its best interest. Sasraku, the Akwamuhene swooped down on Agona in 1688-9 and defeated it.<sup>4</sup> But

---

1. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, pp. 9-10.

2. Cf. pp. 37-39 below.

3. Minutes of Council Meeting (EC), 10 March 1700, WIC 124.

4. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, pp. 23-4.

Akwamu success against Agona did not stop threats from Akyem. Before the century came to a close Akyem hostility had forced Akwamu to erect a system of fortified positions along its border with Akyem.<sup>1</sup> Such a precaution suggests something more than an occasional Akyem hostility merely aimed at securing an uninterrupted passage for its coast-bound trade and communication. It is probable that by now the two Akyem states, particularly Abuakwa, had embarked upon a southward political expansion that Akwamu felt was detrimental to its political, territorial, imperial and economic interests. This suggestion is made in the light of that aspect of Akyem foreign policy which was conspicuous right at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Hence the differences between the two, which in turn hampered the flow of trade from the Akyem country to the coast. The volume of the trade, Bosman said in 1702, "would yet be enlarged if the negroes of Aquamboe and Akim could agree as they generally are at differences."<sup>2</sup>

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century the coast trade had become extremely attractive to the Akyem and other peoples of the forest belt, particularly because it was the only source from which they could obtain firearms.<sup>3</sup> The demand for firearms and ammunition by Gold Coast ethnic groups had by then become very great,<sup>4</sup> on account of

---

1. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, p. 22.

2. Bosman, Description, p. 69.

3. For the most recent and useful discussion of firearms in the Gold Coast, see Kea, R.A., "Firearms and warfare on the Gold and Slave Coasts from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," in J.A.H., Vol. XII, No. 2, 1971, pp. 185-213.

4. Kea, in J.A.H. Vol. XII No. 2 p. 188.

their effective role in inter-state (ethnic) politics. Probably firearms were first introduced into the Gold Coast by the Portuguese in the 1480s, but the Pope banned their sale in Africa, presumably for fear that they might increase the military strength of heathens and Muslims against Christian Europe.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not the Portuguese observed the Papal sanction to the letter, it is not easy to say. At any rate by the seventeenth century, Papal enunciations were losing their force on Europe. Protestant trading nations now had no respect for the Bulls of the Vatican, and began to sell firearms and ammunition to whoever cared to buy them, heathen or Muslim. By 1601 the Dutch were selling firearms to the peoples of the Gold Coast seaboard and teaching them how to use them.<sup>2</sup> In 1610 the Portuguese and Dutch issued guns to their local supporters on the Gold Coast.<sup>3</sup> By the last few decades of the century, the peoples of the Gold Coast were demanding firearms and ammunition with almost insatiable fervour.<sup>4</sup> In 1680 the English reported that guns and ammunition had become "a mighty drug" here.<sup>5</sup> So great

- 
1. R.M. Wilten, Gold Coast Mission History, 1471-1880 p. 4, cited by Hans W. Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana. (London 1967) p. 16, n.2.
  2. P. de Marees, Beschryvinghe ende Historiche Verhael van het Gout Koninchrijk van Guinea enders de Gout-Custe de Mina genaemt liggende in het van Africa; Uitgegeven door S.P. L'Honore Naber (S-Gravenhage 1912) pp. 95-96, cited by Kea, op. cit. p. 187 n. 16.
  3. S. Brun, Schifferten Welcher in ettjehen Ewe Lander etc. (Basel 1624) pp. 86-6, cited by Debrunner op. cit. p. 30 n. 3.
  4. Letter from Elmina Castle (EC) to the Assembly of Ten, 8 March 1684, WIC 124, in Van Danzig, Dutch Documents, p. 28; Kea, op. cit. pp. 192-194.
  5. Bradley & Council (CCC) to the Royal African Company (RAC), 7 December 1680, T 70/20/20.

was the demand that the Royal African Company<sup>1</sup> was even prepared to import Dutch guns for re-export to the Gold Coast and other parts of West Africa, a move which aroused strong protests from English manufacturers.<sup>2</sup> It is clear from the English reaction just referred to that the Dutch exploited the arms trade to the full.<sup>3</sup> At the turn of the century, Dalby Thomas at Cape Coast Castle reckoned the Dutch were selling 20,000 tons of gun-powder annually and large quantities of carbines and blunder-busses in the Gold Coast.<sup>4</sup>

Since this period and subsequent centuries were full of inter-state wars, a connection between the heavy demand for guns and inter-state politics becomes obvious. Richard Gray has pointed out that the use of firearms made relatively little difference, in terms of military advantage, in politics in the Zambezi basin during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>5</sup> Contemporary Gold Coast does not provide as clear-cut an evidence as Gray uses to support his case against the overall importance of firearms in Africa south of the Sahara. But the eighteenth century evidence shows conclusively that heavy demands for firearms

- 
1. For a good study of the RAC see K.G. Davies, The Royal African Company (London 1957).
  2. Petition against the importation of Dutch Guns, 17 October 1684 (T 70/169/28), cited by Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 157 n. 4.
  3. Kea op. cit. p. 195.
  4. Sir Dalby Thomas (CCC) to RAC, 26 August 1705 (T 70/22/1).
  5. R. Gray, "Portuguese Musketeers on the Zambezi," in Journal of African History (JAH) Vol. XII No. 4 (1971) pp. 531-533.

always preceded wars in the Gold Coast.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that those making the demands were fundamentally the combatants, as indeed they really were. It is reasonable to conclude then that the warring parties recognized the effectiveness of guns in their wars.<sup>2</sup> Heerman Abramsz emphasized the connection between firearms and the wars in 1679 when he noted that "since rifles and gunpowder have been introduced things have become much worse, the natives having become much more warlike ..... Consequently the whole Coast has come into a kind of state of war."<sup>3</sup>

The Akyem states stood in need of arms and ammunition. For besides their aggression against Akwamu, violent relations with Asante and others made the acquisition of firearms and ammunition even more imperative. From the second half of the seventeenth century the Abuakwa and the Kotoku, like others elsewhere in the Gold Coast, were engaged not only in state building but also in defending themselves against external attackers. The Denkyera hegemony had sent several ambitious Oyoko clan lineages from the Ofin basin to the districts immediately to the south of the upper reaches of that river.<sup>4</sup> By 1699 these Oyoko clan lineages had conquered

---

1. See Chapter 2, 3 and 4 below.

2. Van Sevenhuysen to Assembly of Ten, 21 June 1700, WIC 124, cf. also Kea, op.cit. p. 207.

3. H. Abramsz to Assembly of Ten, 23 November 1679, Van Danzig, Dutch Documents p. 6. In peace time, however, the guns would, no doubt, be used for hunting. Cf. Chapter 6 pp. 219 219 below.

4. Boahen, Topics, p. 71; - in Ajayi & Espie, A Thousand Years, pp. 166, Fynn, Asante, Chapter Two; - "The Rise of Ashanti", in GNQ No. 9 (1966) p. 25.

the area and had virtually created the Asante Kingdom. Reindorf recalls incessant Asante attacks on Kotoku.<sup>1</sup> This was only to be expected. Both were pursuing similar policies of territorial acquisition and expansion, and were only separated by the Anuru river. That Akyem (Kotoku) and Asante had become hostile to each other by the turn of the seventeenth century is confirmed by the fact that in 1698-1701 when Asante was at war with Denkyera the Akyem went to the aid of the latter.<sup>2</sup> Obviously the exigencies of the current political situation had compelled Kotoku, and Abuakwa too, to forget about the mid-seventeenth century Denkyera tyranny. The thinking of the Akyem states would seem to have been that now the power to watch most was Asante.

Unfortunately for Akyem as a whole, relations between Abuakwa and Kotoku do not seem to have been always cordial. In the 1680s Barbot remarked that disunity "rendered [the Akyem] less formidable to their neighbours."<sup>3</sup> Bosman must have been alluding to the same disunity at the beginning of the eighteenth century when he noted that the Akwamu knew "how, by fair words and presents, to sow dissensions betwixt the governing men of Akim."<sup>4</sup> Barbot and Bosman may have been referring to differences between the

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 49.

2. See Chapter 2, p. 65 below.

3. Quoted by Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 172.

4. Bosman, Description, p. 69.

Akyem Abuakwa and the Akyem Kotoku, considering that during the first quarter of the eighteenth century disagreements existed between these two Akyem states.<sup>1</sup> It is not certain what the sources of the differences were. Probably the desire of each to dominate the other was one of them; even to this day, the Abuakwahene claims to be the Okyenhene i.e. King of all Akyem. The differences, whatever the cause or causes, weakened Akyem concerted action against its neighbours during the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the seventeenth century then Akyem Abuakwa and Akyem Kotoku had been founded. Like many other Akan states they were monarchical state systems. The one was sited roughly between the Pra and Birem, and the other between the Pra and Anuru. The ruling house of Abuakwa was of the Asona clan, and that of Kotoku of the Agona clan. Each had already adopted a foreign policy geared towards the achievement of territorial expansion and the acquisition of wealth through trade, particularly the European trade on the Guinea coast. For among the commodities offered by the European merchants were firearms, a sure means of achieving military superiority. These policies necessarily meant a condition of continuous rivalry with neighbouring states like Akwamu and Asante which sought similar ends. Differences between the Akyem states themselves must also not be ruled out. Thus by the end of the seventeenth century almost all the factors which were to influence the history of the Akyem peoples for almost the next two hundred years were already present.

---

1. See Chapter 2 pp. 48-49 below.

2. *ibid.*

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SEARCH FOR SUPREMACY AND SECURITY

1700-1727

Commotion and a general sense of insecurity were the hallmarks of the Akyem country during the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In the first ten years immigrants fleeing from enemies in Asante arrived to found Bosome. During the same period and the next seventeen years the older states, Abuakwa and Kotoku, engaged in a search for political supremacy over their neighbours and avenues to increase their material well-being through trade. At any rate they were determined not to fall victim to neighbours pursuing a similar policy. Consequently alliances were as often and conveniently contracted as they were rejected. The various peoples of the Gold Coast were participants, as it were, in an inter-state game of supremacy and survival of the fittest.<sup>2</sup> For Abuakwa and Kotoku the period as a whole was one of unfulfilled hopes.

The number of organized states in Akyem increased from two to three during the first ten years of the eighteenth century when the Bosome state was founded in Western Akyem. The founders were immigrants from Boaman, a small state in the lacustrine district around Lake Bosomtwe in Southern Asante.

- 
1. Compare with Ward's assertion that this century as well as the seventeenth saw great instability, movement, flux and change in the Gold Coast. Cf. A History of Ghana (1967 ed.) p. 104.
  2. Others have studied this period and almost the same events from different angles. See for example I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, and in THSG. Vol. III Part 2; Daaku, Trade and Politics, Chapter VII; Fynn, Asante Chapters Two and Three; Kwamena-Poh, Government & Politics Chapter One.



The background of the migration from Boaman to Western Akyem was conflict between the inhabitants of Boaman and Kumasi, the foremost state in the Asante Union (or confederation) formed during the last years of the seventeenth century. The people of Boaman supported Denkyera and suffered a defeat at the hands of Asante in 1701.<sup>1</sup> In spite of defeat, Boaman continued to assist Denkyera in guerrilla warfare against Asante. Clan affinity may have been a reason for the Boaman support for Denkyera because the ruling lineages of both were of the Agona abusua. Preservation of its independence was probably another reason, since Boaman was a small but ambitious state.<sup>2</sup> At any rate its inhabitants were in the habit of infesting trade routes with a view to raiding and robbing traders and travellers plying the routes.<sup>3</sup> To put an end to their acts of banditry and predatoriness, Asantehene Osei Tutu, in or around 1706, organized an armed expedition against Ntow Kroko, the Boamanhene, and his subjects. Ntow was defeated and, to escape further punishment, migrated with some of his subjects to Western Akyem where he founded a new state and called it Bosome.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Wilks, in Ajayi & Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. One, p. 374.

2. Ibid.

3. Wilks, in Ajayi & Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. One, p. 374.

4. Elmina Journal, Letter from Landman, 11 April 1707 cited by I. Wilks, "The Mossi and Akan States, 1500-1800, in Ajayi & Crowder (ed.), History of West Africa, Vol. I, p. 374. A. A. Kyerematen, "Ashanti Royal Regalia: Their History and Functions" (Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford 1966), pp. 219-221.

The migration to western Akyem apparently did not win the approval of all sections of Boaman society. Some members of the ruling lineage and the subjects remained in Asante till the 1818-1825 period when yet another clash with Kumasi forced them to migrate, again to Western Akyem, to join their kinsmen already settled there.<sup>1</sup>

Until the 1820s Akyem Bosome appears to have remained a backwater to Akyem politics in particular and the Gold Coast in general. Virtually nothing is heard of it until the crisis of the nineteenth century. Even in that century Bosome, from the point of view of European observers, did not draw much attention until about 1860 when it was engulfed in a conflict between Abuakwa and Kotoku.<sup>2</sup>

Before the nineteenth century, cordiality and co-operation on the whole dominated Abuakwa-Kotoku relations. Both seem to have reached a consensus as to what the objectives of their foreign policy should be; namely acquisition of imperial domination over neighbours (or at worst the preservation of Akyem territorial integrity and political independence), as well as a full uninterrupted Akyem participation in the European trade on the coast. Which of these objectives was to be given priority was, however, the issue on which they never seem to have come to agreement throughout the first twenty-seven years of the eighteenth century.

Two Kotoku Kings and one Abuakwa monarch reigned during that period. For Kotoku they were Apenten and Frimpon Manso. Frimpon's reign actually went beyond 1727. It is not

---

1. See Chapter 5, p.193 below.

2. See Chapter 7, p.<sup>239</sup> below.

certain when Apenten ascended the Kotoku stool. European traders on the coast noted that he was Kotokuhene in 1715<sup>1</sup> and recorded his death in 1717.<sup>2</sup> Reindorf says the King of Asante-Akyem (i.e. the Kotokuhene) in 1702 was called Ofosuhene Apenten, adding that this Kotoku King was taken prisoner in a war with Asante.<sup>3</sup> Contemporary records show that an Akyem Chief of the name of Apenten was killed in a war with Asante in 1717.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Apenten of the contemporary records and Ofosuhene Apenten of Reindorf are most probably one and the same person.

Contemporary to Apenten was Abuakwahene Ofori.<sup>5</sup> The exact date of his accession to the Abuakwa stool is not clear. His name, however, appears, apparently for the first time, in European records in 1704. In that year the Dutch traders on the coast sent him gifts which included guns and gun-powder as well as a scarlet cloth.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the presents

---

1. Doutreleau (Accra) to Director-General H.H. Haring (Elmina Castle (EC), 10 October 1715, NBKG, 82.

2. Cf. p. 68 below.

3. Reindorf, History, pp. 65-66.

4. See note 2, above.

5. Reindorf says Kuntunkurunku was the Abuakwahene at the time of Ofosuhene Apenten, cf. Reindorf, History, pp. 65-6. Though generally an intelligent writer, it seems that Reindorf was confused as to who the Abuakwa rulers were in the early 18th century. On p. 348 he fixes Kuntunkurunku's reign in the 16th century.

6. Director-General William de la Palma (EC) to Holland, 9 April 1704, cited by Fynn, "Akyem Abuakwa Kings", p. 2, n. 3.

symbolised Dutch congratulations to him on his enstoolment. In any case available evidence (documentary and traditional) marks him out as being completely different from the Abuakwa-hene who in 1702 was described as "young and betraying but too palpable signs of a cruel nature," to the extent that part of the government of the chiefdom was taken away from him.<sup>1</sup> Probably this chief was deposed altogether in or about 1704 and Ofori put on the Abuakwa stool. Ofori of the records is most probably the same as the Ofori Panin<sup>2</sup> whom tradition remembers so much.<sup>3</sup> Ofori (Panin) died in 1727.<sup>4</sup>

Up to 1727 Ofori pursued a dynamic foreign policy. He was, or was made to appear, aggressive to many of his neighbours, especially Agona, Fante, Assin, Gomoa, and above all Akwamu. His aim was two-fold: he was determined to achieve imperial domination over these neighbours and to share fully in the European trade on the coast. His Kotoku counterpart, Apenten, espoused similar objectives and generally showed willingness to co-operate with Ofori in realising these objectives. But in 1727 when Ofori died, neither Abuakwa nor Kotoku had attained to these goals.

---

1. Bosman, Description, p. 78.

2. The term 'Panin' in Akan means 'The Elder' as against 'Kuma' i.e. 'The Younger'. Panin is used to distinguish this Ofori from another Ofori (Kuma), an Abuakwa Prince who is generally remembered by tradition as the founder of the Akuapem state. Cf. Chapter 3 p. below.

3. See Chapter 1, p. 12 above.

4. Cf. p. 78 below.

The fundamental cause of the failure of these two Akyem states to achieve their avowed objectives was disagreement between them regarding priorities in their programme. They had to choose between ensuring territorial security to their kingdoms and a quick achievement of imperial as well as economic greatness. The circumstances of the time and place did not allow them to pursue, with competence, all their objectives at the same time. Relations between them and neighbours during the first twenty-seven years of the eighteenth century show that they never on a single occasion reached a full agreement on this issue. Bosman was probably alluding to this disagreement in 1702 when he said the Akwamu for instance knew "how by fair words and presents to sow dissensions betwixt the governing men of Akim."<sup>1</sup> And in the 1680s Barbot had said that disunity in the Akyem country "rendered it less formidable to their neighbours."<sup>2</sup> Relations between Abuakwa and Kotoku on the one hand and their southern neighbours on the other fully justify both assertions.

What basically vitiated the concerted effort of Abuakwa and Kotoku was the difference in their geographical positions in relation to their neighbours. Located in southern Akyem, Abuakwa had comparatively weaker neighbours. Among these were Assin, Agona, Fante and Akwamu. In contrast Kotoku, situate in northern Akyem, had the rising power of Asante for a neighbour. Thus while Abuakwa thought the

---

1. Bosman, Description, p. 69.

2. Quoted by Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 172.

southern neighbours should be defeated in order to achieve imperial domination over them as well as gain an uninterrupted access to the coast trade, Kotoku was basically concerned with protecting and preserving its very independence and identity against Asante. This was the dilemma in the overall Akyem foreign policy.

Right from the beginning of the eighteenth century Abuakwa showed hostility towards Akwamu. Between 1699 and 1700 there were constant reports on the coast of Akyem (Abuakwa) attacks or impending attacks on Akwamu.<sup>1</sup> The general opinion on the coast was that the Akyem Abuakwa hostility was to compel Akwamu to pay a debt it owed to the Abuakwa court. The Danes reckoned the amount involved to be about 3,000 oz. of gold.<sup>2</sup>

There are three different views as to how Akwamu contracted the Akyem debt. One view suggests that the debt was an annual tribute which Akwamu was obliged to pay to the Akyem (Abuakwa Court) because the Abuakwa "pretended a feudal right over" the Akwamu; the pretension raised differences between the two because

"the Aquamboans will by no means submit to It, as knowing very well that a concession of that nature may in time cost them their whole country".<sup>3</sup>

The second view is that the debt was in connection with a compensation payable by Akwamu to the Abuakwa Court in a

1. CCO Day Journal, entry, 10 October, 1699, Vgk, cited by Fynn, Asante, p. 23 n. 6; Minutes of Council Meeting (EC), 23rd February 1700, WIC 124.
2. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 64.
3. Bosman, Description, p. 69; cf. also Barbot, in Churchill, p. 182.

marriage arrangement, which had apparently fallen through.<sup>1</sup> The third and most recent opinion is that the debt resulted from a loan which the Bansa Court had given to Akwamuhene Ansa Sasraku in 1677 when the Akwamu were about to go to war against the Ga; Ansa died without paying the loan and so bequeathed the liability to his successors.<sup>2</sup> Of all these views, Romer's seems the least plausible. Neither Akwamu nor Abuakwa recall a marriage between the two courts. Rather there was one between Akwamu and Kotoku in the second decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Romer was on the coast during the 1730s, and may have been told of this marriage. Writing in 1765, almost twenty-five years after his residence at Christianborg Castle, he may have mistaken Kotoku for Abuakwa. The view held by Barbot and Bosman also does not lend itself to easy acceptance without misgivings: it raises the issue as to when Akyem Abuakwa imposed its overlordship on Akwamu. Available evidence does not suggest any Abuakwa conquest of Akwamu during the seventeenth century to warrant feudal relationship between the two. The loan theory is most acceptable. In March 1700 Rohart thus commented on the Akyem-Akwamu conflict:

"The disruption of the trade at Accra has its origins in the claims the Akim Negroes pretend to have on the Aquamboes concerning gold and men supplied by them some time ago to the Aquamboe King called Ahinsang [i.e. Ansa Sasraku] to help him defeat the Accra negroes."

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 105.

2. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, pp. 9-10.

3. See pp. 52 & 60 below.

Rohart then goes on to say how the Akyem kept on extracting monies from the Akwamu rulers even though the latter had made several payments to the former in relation to the loan.<sup>1</sup> Apparently the Akwamu had merely been servicing the loan. Hence the Akyem pressure on them to pay it.

Rivalry in trade was another source of friction. In the 1700-1703 period Akwamu blockaded the trade routes against Akyem trade to and from the Ga coast.<sup>2</sup> This ban appears to have been very effective because it required Dutch intercession with the Akwamuhene to get it lifted.<sup>3</sup> Writing in 1709 Sir Dalby Thomas at Cape Coast Castle said:

"Akim is a rich country [which] lies mostly on the backside of the Quamboe country and Unguine [Agona] and are hindered by them from making trade they would do."<sup>4</sup>

In the first fourteen years of the century there was continual rumour of impending Akyem Abuakwa attack on Akwamu. Perhaps the Akyem aim was partly to gain an uninterrupted access to the coast trade. But it seems to have been all barking and no biting on the part of Abuakwa. The British in 1705 longed for the day the Akyem would actually descend "on the young and hair-brained king of Quamboe;" that, they said, would be "the best thing done on the coast for several years."<sup>5</sup> In 1706 the Dutch expressed

---

1. Rohart at Council Meeting (EC), 10 March 1700, WIC 124.

2. Day-Journal (CCO) entry, 21 May 1700 (Vgk 121); Minutes of Council Meeting (EC), 10 March 1700, WIC 124; EC Journal, entry, 3 April 1703, NBKG 98.

3. Daaku, Trade & Politics pp. 171-2.

4. Dalby Thomas (CCC) to the Royal African Company (RAC), 26 Nov. 1709, T70/175.

5. Abstract of Letters from Cape Coast to RAC, 1 Jan. 1705 T70/1184/4, quoted by Daaku, Trade and Politics, p. 172.



similar sentiments, on hearing of an impending Akyem attack on Akwamu.<sup>1</sup> But Abuakwa failed to convert threats to action.

Lack of allied assistance from Kotoku appears to explain Abuakwa's failure. Kotoku had two major reasons for not co-operating with Abuakwa in the hostility against Akwamu. These were marriage ties with Akwamu and tension with Asante. As already pointed out, one of Apenten's wives was an Akwamu princess. Perhaps she was one of the 'gifts' and 'fair words' with which Akwamu succeeded in creating differences among Akyem leaders spoken of by Bosman in 1702. The marriage was bound to nullify any talk of Abuakwa-Kotoku concerted action against Akwamu. Among the Akan, as among others in the Gold Coast and elsewhere in Africa, marriage was regarded as a bond between not only the two individuals involved but also the families, towns and even states (in the case of royal marriages) of the man and woman. That the marriage ties were a barrier to Abuakwa-Kotoku co-operation against Akwamu is proved by what happened in 1715. In that year Apenten divorced his Akwamu wife, and immediately after, there was an Abuakwa-Kotoku concerted move to attack Akwamu.<sup>2</sup> The move adversely affected trade. Trade in the Ga area was no longer "as voluminous as it used to be, which is caused by [the fact that] Quamboes and Agonnas are on the alert" against the Akyem states.<sup>3</sup> The Dutch gave 24th December 1715 as the zero hour of the expected attack of the Akyem on either Akwamu or any one of the southern states such as Agona. But at this

---

1. Peter Nuij (Accra) to Amsterdam, 24 June 1706 (WIC 115).

2. Van Dyke (Accra) to Haring (EC), 26 December 1715.

3. Van Dyke to Haring, 26 Dec. 1715; also Hendrix (Apam) to Haring, 3 Dec.; E.C. Journal, entry, 5 Dec. 1715, NBKG 82; E.C. Journal, entry, 5 Jan. 1716; 'Abren' (Senya Breku) to Haring, 8 Jan.; Hendrix (Apam) to Haring, 15 & 30 January 1716, NBKG 82.

crucial moment, tension between Kotoku and Asante<sup>1</sup> obliged the suspension of the southern venture till about 1729 when it was taken up again.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrent with the tension with Akwamu, were Abuakwa's strained relations with other neighbours such as Agona and Akanny. There are conflicting views regarding the identity of Akanny. It is sometimes identified with Adanse,<sup>3</sup> at others with Assin.<sup>4</sup> The second view seems more acceptable. Until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Assin inhabited the territory between River Pra and the Twisa section of the Adanse hills. It is therefore easy to confuse them with Adanse.

In the nineteenth century Assin was divided into two principalities. These were Apemanim and Atannoso. Perhaps the division dated further back to the eighteenth century. Whatever was the arrangement regarding Assin's political map, Abuakwa under Ofori threatened to, or did, attack it in the first half of 1715.<sup>5</sup> A fundamental cause of the Akyem hostility appears to have been Assin's friendship with Asante, an enemy of the Akyem states, particularly Kotoku.<sup>6</sup> It has also been suggested that a clash of

1. This theme is fully discussed on pp.66-78 below.

2. Cf. Chapter 3pp79f below.

3. Macdonald, The Gold Coast, p. 104; cf. also Fage's note on Akanny in Bosman, (1967 ed.), p. 522.

4. Boahen, Topics, p. 62.

5. Zelot (Accra) to Haring, Director-General (EC) 17 & 30 March; Van Visbeck (Kormantse) to Haring, 19 April; E.C. Diary, entry, 20 April; Henderix (Apam) to Haring, 19 June 1715, NBKG 82.

6. Fynn, Asante, p. 45.

economic interests and bickerings characteristic of neighbours were another set of causes.<sup>1</sup> What detracts from the second suggestion is that it is based on the evidence of O. Dapper in the middle years of the seventeenth century. Times and situations had naturally changed by 1715. Admittedly trade continued to be a source of inter-state friction, but as regards Akyem-Assin (Akanny) relations there seems to have been a weightier reason which, in the light of available evidence, cannot be identified at present. Perhaps Abuakwa's political and territorial ambitions were the cause. Akwamu for example was so worried about this aspect of Abuakwa foreign policy that she is said to have fortified some sections of her border with Akyem.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may have been the cause, or causes, of the Akyem aggression, Assin (Akanny) admitted its inability to stand alone against the arms of Abuakwa and Kotoku by appealing to the Fante for assistance and protection.<sup>3</sup>

The appeal to Fante seriously affected Ofori's war plans on Akanny because of the seemingly military strength of Fante. Up to about the end of the seventeenth century the Fante were inclined to be divided into many states, some of them not larger than a single town. These were individualistic in attitude and warred among themselves.<sup>4</sup> By the first twenty

1. Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 169.

2. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, p. 22.

3. Jan van Visbeek (Kormantse) to Haring, 20 August 1715, NBKG 82.

4. Margaret Priestley, "The Ashanti Question and the British: Eighteenth Century Origins", in J.A.H. Vol. 2(1961), p. 37 n. 9.

years of the eighteenth century, however, they had achieved considerable unity by forming themselves into a kind of confederation.<sup>1</sup> This gave them a semblance of formidability. This point, however, must not be overemphasized. The old elements of disunity and internal bickerings were still prevalent to some degree. What happened after the Akanny appeal illustrates this view. They were all agreed that a general meeting was required to consider the appeal from Akanny. But they could not readily agree on where to assemble. A Dutch report said

"the Caboceers of Abrah summoned the Braffo to them, saying that they constituted the most powerful Fantyn and therefore the meeting must be held there".<sup>2</sup>

The Braffo may well have been based at Mankesim<sup>3</sup> at that time. Abora and Mankesim were thus vying for political leadership in Fante. The Akanny request provided an occasion for this internal struggle for power in Fante to come into the open. For some time the Fante quarrelled over the venue for the meeting. Eventually the choice fell on Abora.

As soon as the debate on the venue was settled the Fante worked with purpose and alacrity. The confederation

- 
1. S. Tenkorang, British Slave Trading Activities in the Gold and Slave Coasts and their Impact on African Society M.A. Thesis, (London 1864, Unpublished) pp. 145-7.
  2. J. Van Visbeek (Kormantse) to Haring (EC), 20 August 1715, NBKG 82. Caboceer = Chief, Abrah = Abora, and Braffo was the title of the Commander-in-Chief of all Fante forces.
  3. Mankesim was at least initially the religious capital of the Fante. Since among the Akan, religion played a part in war preparations, Mankesim could be a fitting place for the Braffo to reside.

decided to help Akanny against Abuakwa, because, as they put it, "if the Akannists were defeated, they [the Fante] would not go free".<sup>1</sup>

Ofori's aggression had thus brought upon him war with Fante. This additional hazard he sought to avert by diplomacy. He sent an official embassy to tell the Fante Confederacy meeting at Abora that Abuakwa had no war with Fante; therefore Fante should not go to the aid of his enemy. But if the Fante insisted on helping Akanny, they would be doing so at the risk of an Abuakwa invasion of their country.<sup>2</sup> This threat annoyed the Fante. Their reply was terse and unequivocal: they informed the Abuakwa that the Fante

"and the Akannist were, and are still, one; if the Akims ..... wanted to come and fight, they [Fante & Assin] will welcome them."<sup>3</sup>

The Fante fortitude frightened Ofori, but not to the extent of making him give up the Akanny venture. As a counter to the Akanny-Fante alliance, a military co-operation with Agona looked like a fine proposition, owing to Agona's geographical position in relation to Fante as well as Assin. Agona was a neighbour to the south-west. By virtue of this position Agona was also a neighbour of Akanny to the north of it and of Fante to the west. An Abuakwa-Agona alliance would thus be a thorn in the side of both Akanny and Fante. Such an alliance might possibly force the Fante to reconsider

---

1. Van Visbeek's Report of 20 August 1715.

2. Ibid.

3. Van Visbeek's Report, 20 August 1715, NBKG 82.

their relations with Akanny. Ofori therefore turned to Agona.

This country, like Akyem, seems to have divided into two sections, each independent of the other. Nsaba was probably the capital of the more southerly section, though Agona Swedru appears to have been its chief commercial centre. The more northerly Agona had its capital at Nyarkrom. The King of Nyarkrom in early eighteenth century was Nyarko Eku (Nyarko Ako as Reindorff calls him.)<sup>1</sup> Nyarko Eku seems to have been the most powerful of all the Agona chiefs. In June 1715 "Akim Caboceer Afory [Ofori] sent to the said Jaconcoe [Nyarko Eku] an empty bowl with the promise to present it to him full of gold if he would join him Afory against Acanists and Acrons."<sup>2</sup> The Abuakwahehene was clearly using Akyem gold and Acron to entice Agona into an offensive alliance. Acron was no other country than Gomoa. The records do not show that Ofori was at variance with Gomoa at this time. But it was probably in this period that there were differences between Nyarko Eku and Gomoa.<sup>3</sup> Hence Ofori's proposition of an Abuakwa-Agona (Nyarkrom) attack on Gomoa. It is even said that Akyem (Abuakwa) did actually sign a treaty with Nyarko Eku.<sup>4</sup>

Ofori had been too slow in making this diplomatic move. Confederate Fante was already an ally of Agona (Nyarkrom). Neither Akyem gold nor a joint attack on Gomoa

1. Reindorf, History, p. 63.

2. Hendrix (Apam) to Haring (EC), 6 June 1715, NBKG 82.

3. Reindorf, History, pp. 62-65.

4. Fynn, Asante p. 46. The present author finds this doubtful, in view of Eku's relations with Fante at that time. Cf below.

could make Nyarko shift alliances. For to make sure that Nyarko Eku kept faith with them, the Fante had taken securities from Nyarkrom in the form of hostages who included Nyarko's own son.<sup>1</sup> Consequently in reply to the Abuakwa proposal, the Nyarkromhene said he was already committed to the Fante; besides, he even feared that in his hour of success against Fante and Akanny, Ofori might turn on Nyarkrom itself.<sup>2</sup>

The Nyarkrom stand contrasted with that of Agona-Nsaba. Swedru, as already stated, was the most important commercial town of this section of Agona. The commercial man's desire for business and profits led Agona Swedru to contract a trade pact not only with Ofori of Abuakwa but also Apenten of Kotoku. In May 1715 it was known at Senya Breku that the

"Agonna large crom Soedoe [had taken] oath with Caboceer Afory and Caboceer Apenten that they will not close the [trade] routes, nor start any quarrel with Akim traders, but will sell to the Akims as much [gun-] powder and [as many] guns as the Akims required."<sup>3</sup>

The Dutch, and obviously the inhabitants of Agona Swedru, enthused after the signing of the pact, because soon after it, large numbers of Akyem traders arrived on the Simpa (Winneba) - Senya Breku coast, bringing with them large quantities of gold to purchase arms and ammunition.<sup>4</sup> But the advantages

---

1. Hendrix (Apam) to Haring (EC), 6 June 1715, MBKG 82.

2. Ibid.

3. Boerhaven (Senya Breku) to Haring (EC), 28 May 1715, NBKG 82; cf also Hendrix (Apam) to Haring, 6 June 1715, NBKG 82. Crom or Kuro is Akan word for town.

4. Boerhaven to Haring, 28 May 1715, NBKG82.

of the pact were not one-sided. To the Akyem the greater significance of the pact with Swedru lay in the alternative access, vis-a-vis the Akwamu route, to the coast trade which it gave them; it rendered the Akwamu blockade of Akyem communication with the Ga coast ineffective.

Nyanoase, the Akwamu capital, may have anticipated the Akyem diplomatic and trade move in Swedru and found it a useful indicator to impending Akyem bellicosity. For by March 1715 Akwamu too had joined the Fante alliance.<sup>1</sup> Nyarko Eku of Nyarkrom had of course been anticipating Akyem hostility. He too sought to strengthen the Fante alliance by increasing its membership. By early 1716 it was known that he had composed his differences with Acron (Gomoa) and had helped Gomoa to gain membership to the Fante alliance.<sup>2</sup> Of course a revelation of the Abuakwa hostile proposals to Gomoa would be enough to drive Gomoa too to join the alliance. Thus by the end of 1715 Ofori's aggressive foreign policy had raised a hornet's nest in the south. Akanny, (Assin), Confederate Fante, Agona (Nyarkrom, eventually joined by Nsaba-Agona), Akwamu and Gomoa had all formed one big alliance against Abuakwa. Could Abuakwa cope with it? Certainly not. The Dutch for instance had no doubt about this. They commented that even though Akim was

"great and powerful ..... the Fantyn, Accanists, Acron, Agonna and Quamboes are no less, besides these districts are so vast that it will be impossible [for Akyem] to fight them all at once,

---

1. Zelst (Accra) to Haring, 17 & 30 March 1715, NBKG 82.

2. Van Dyke (Accra) to Haring, 8 March 1716, NBKG 83.



especially when Akim ..... have no more allies than the Cabes Terras and Adoms who have nothing to boast of but the mere existence of their name ..... and the Juffer who, with the Warsaw are expected to join the Ashantyns against Aoweens ....."<sup>1</sup>

Worse for Abuakwa was the difference in opinion between her and Kotoku. The joint trade agreement contracted with Agona Swedru in May 1715 suggests that Abuakwa and Kotoku were now coming together. The Asante were campaigning in Aowin, far away in south-western Gold Coast. This obviously had given Kotokuhene Apenten a chance to turn his attention to matters in the south. The only barrier to an Abuakwa-Kotoku alliance was therefore Apenten's marital links with the Akwamu royal house. In late 1715, however, he divorced his Akwamu wife.<sup>2</sup> The event convinced Europeans on the coast that Akyem was now ready for a war against Akwamu or any of the southern states. The Dutch for instance said the impending attack of the Akyem would take place as from 24th December.<sup>3</sup>

The expected Akyem invasion, however, did not take place, apparently because Kotoku suddenly withdrew from the venture. The cause of the Kotoku withdrawal was tension with Asante. While the Southern Question continued to attract Abuakwa as a light draws a moth, the Northern problem, namely

- 
1. Haring (EC) to Doutreleau (Accra), 5 November 1715 (NBKG 82) Cabes Terra, according to Bosman (p. 77) was a state, perhaps very small, between Akanny and Asebu. 'Adoms' were the Etsii. 'Juffer' i.e. Twifo; the Warsaws were Wassa; and Aoween were the Aowin.
  2. Van Dyke (Accra) to Haring (EG), 26 December 1715, NBKG. 82.
  3. Ibid.

relations with Asante, pre-occupied Kotoku. This difference cropped up in 1715 to nullify the joint Abuakwa-Kotoku venture to the south.<sup>1</sup> Up to the end of December 1715 when the projected Akyem invasion of either Akwamu or Agona had not taken place, the coastal peoples began to speculate that there might have been, or there was going to be, a negotiated peace settlement between the Akyem states and their southern neighbours.<sup>2</sup> The speculation turned out to be correct. Left in the lurch, as it were, by Apenten of Kotoku, Ofori of Abuakwa could not go ahead confidently with the projected invasion of the south. And so he tried to settle his differences with Akwamu and Agona through negotiation. He is believed to have given Akwamu 200 bendas of gold (£1,600.00) as a peace price.<sup>3</sup> This enabled Akyem traders to pass through Akwamu to the forts and castles on the Ga (Accra) coast to trade. But when he approached Agona with a similar peace proposal he met with a rebuff. The uncompromising attitude of Agona is capable of two possible explanations. The first is that Abuakwa refused to meet the demands Agona put forward as pre-conditions e.g. payment of £800.<sup>4</sup> It is, however, possible that the Agona themselves were just not willing to come to peace terms with Ofori: for there is a suggestion, which may well be correct, that Agona was at this time flirting with

---

1. See pp. 67f. below.

2. Van Dyke (Accra) to Haring (EC), 31 December 1715, NBKG 82.

3. Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 174. 1 benda = £8.00. But see the figure he gives on p. 34.

4. Daaku, op. cit., p. 34.

Asante.<sup>1</sup> Friendship with Asante would of course encourage Agona to adopt an uncompromising attitude towards the Akyem.

In the end Agona nearly paid dearly for its intransigence. Ofori was furious with Agona. Though an impending Kotoku-Asante war<sup>2</sup> rendered his northern borders very unsafe, in early 1716 he took the risk of invading Agona without any allied support.<sup>3</sup> The Abuakwa attack on Agona brought trade to a standstill. Ironically some of the Europeans on the coast, especially the Dutch, were happy with this development. This was as to be expected. The Dutch had all along been looking forward to seeing such an Akyem invasion of the south. In fact the Dutch went one step further to increase the chances of Akyem success. The Akwamu Resident Commissioner for the Ga Province was Prince Amo, a member of the Akwamu royal house. Amo had his headquarters at 'Dutch' Accra. The Akwamuhene sent him orders to raise a Ga contingent to join the Akwamu army that was about to go to the assistance of Agona. On hearing about the message from Akwamu the Dutch threatened that they would hand Amo over to the Akyem in the event of Akyem victory in the impending war.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this threat Amo refused to raise the Ga contingent requested by the Akwamuhene.

---

1. Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 174.

2. See p.65 below.

3. Van Dyke (Accra) to Haring (EC), 8 March; EC Diary entry, 10 March 1716 (NBKG 82).

4. Van Dyke (Accra) to EC, 13 March 1716 (NBKG 82).

The intention of the Akwamuhene to go and help Agona shows that the 200 bendas of gold gift from Abuakwa had failed to influence him to side with Akyem, unless of course the gift was meant only to purchase for the Akyem a free passage through Akwamu to the trade on the Ga coast.

The entire southern alliance prepared to go to the help of Agona.<sup>1</sup> Then suddenly the Abuakwa invading army withdrew from Agona soil. Dutch reaction to the news of withdrawal was one of utter disbelief. They described it as "very disgraceful and shameful."<sup>2</sup> The truth was that they were completely disappointed in the Akyem states. And well they might be, in view of their strong moral support for the Akyem. Besides, withdrawal meant the continuance of the southern blockade of the trade routes against the Akyem gold trade, which an Akyem victory would have allowed to flow smoothly to the coast. The blocking of the trade routes, the suspense, and the atmosphere of expectancy would all prevent the southern states themselves from paying any serious attention to trade because they would be on the alert to defend their borders. Trade would thus be the loser. This, was exactly what happened. The southern states tightened the economic sanction against Abuakwa and Kotoku.<sup>3</sup> And in the eastern sector of the coast, trade without the

---

1. Van Naerssen (Senya Breku) to E.C., 10 March 1716 (NBKG 82).

2. Van Naerssen to Hendrix (Apam), 25 March; cf. also Hendrix to EC, 26 March; EC Diary, entry, 1 April 1716 (NBKG 82).

3. EC Diary, entries, 10 March & 2 June 1716, NBKG 82; Snoek (Accra) to EC, 25 August, 26 September & 9 October 1716; Hendrix (Apam) to EC 19 December; EC Diary, entry, 23 December 1716, NBKG 83.

Akyem states was deprived of a major element. It is not surprising that in December 1716 the Dutch complained bitterly that "if the Akims had attacked with gain or loss, an agreement [among the states] would have been reached. But now the prospects are remote."<sup>1</sup> To Hendrix at Apam, this was all the more damaging to trade because "Akim is the fountain from which the trade in gold flows into these countries [i.e. the coast states]."<sup>2</sup>

There were conflicting views at the time as to reasons for the sudden and unexpected withdrawal of the Abuakwa invading army. The Fante claimed that their alliance with Agona had frightened away the Abuakwa invaders.<sup>3</sup> The weakness of the Fante claim is that it suggests that Abuakwa was unaware of the possibility of Fante aid to Agona. This was not the case. The second view was held by some of the Dutch. They contended that the withdrawal was to enable the Abuakwa to attend to their farming.<sup>4</sup> This view has something to commend it. But it is significant to point out that many wars in the Gold Coast, some involving Abuakwa, are known to have been fought in the farming season, which generally started from late February to May. For example, the Akyem-Asante war of 1742 was fought in the farming season.<sup>5</sup> The third view, also

1. Hendrix to EC, 19 December 1716, NBKG 83.

2. Ibid.

3. Van Naerssen (Senya Breku) to EC, 25 March 1716, NBKG 82.

4. Hendrix to EC, 6 & 10 April 1716, NBKG 82; cf also Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 175.

5. See Chapter 3, pp. 114f below.

advanced by another section of the Dutch, was that pressure from Asante necessitated the sudden withdrawal.<sup>1</sup> This was the most accurate view. During the period between October and December 1715 reports reaching the coast said that Kotoku was threatening Asante with an attack.<sup>2</sup> By early 1716 aggression had passed from Oda to Kumasi. Instead of waiting for Apenten to attack him, Osei Tutu decided to carry the war to his adversary. As soon as his army returned from the campaign in Aowin, the Asantehene ordered the invasion of Kotoku. Of course an invasion of Kotoku was also a threat to Abuakwa. Ofori might have a different opinion regarding priorities in the over-all foreign policy of Akyem, but a war in Kotoku could easily spill into his territory. The sudden withdrawal of his army from Agona was to enable him to re-deploy it in defence of his northern borders, by joining Kotoku against Asante.

The tension between Kotoku and Asante dated back to the very beginning of the eighteenth century. By the beginning of that century, Kotoku was as hostile to Asante as Abuakwa was to Akwamu. In 1701 Akyem (Kotoku) assisted Denkyera in a war against Asante.<sup>3</sup> Kotoku and Denkyera suffered a defeat at the hands of Asante. Bosman, on the coast, was informed that "of the Negroes of Akim only who came to the assistance of Denkirans there were about 30,000

---

1. Butler (Axim) to EC, 13 December 1715; Haring to Holland, 15 December 1715, NBKG 82; cf also Daaku, Trade & Politics p. 175.

2. See p. 67 below.

3. This war is traditionally known as the Feyiase War. The war is well documented in the general histories and Fynn's recent study on Asante.

killed, besides a great Caboceer of Akim with all his men were cut off."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of their defeat and the heavy losses in men, the Kotoku were never forgiven for allying with Denkyera. During the Feyiase war, Denkyera had been the aggressor. Alliance with Denkyera therefore meant Kotoku aggression against Asante. Kumasi resolved to punish Kotoku further for the alliance with Denkyera. This seems to explain, partly at least, why after 1701 Asante war-mongers demanded total war with Kotoku. In or about 1702 Akyem (Kotoku) was attacked directly by Asante and defeated, upon which the Kotoku agreed to pay war indemnity of 2,000 bendas of gold.<sup>2</sup> Before long, however, they repudiated both indemnity and the implied vassalage to Kumasi. They continued to ally with Denkyera. In 1712 for example it was known on the coast that the two were allies.<sup>3</sup> Another cause of Asante's anger with Kotoku seems to have been that the Akyem Kotoku also tried to defend others like Twifo against Asante. In the same year of 1712 they leant both moral and material support to Twifo in its conflict with Asante.<sup>4</sup>

Probably there was a lull in the Kotoku-Asante tension between 1713 and late 1715. At least in 1715 the Asante army was campaigning in distant Aowin in south-western

---

1. Bosman, Description, p. 76. Bosman felt the number given as Akyem losses may have been an exaggeration. For the significance of the war to Asante, see Fynn, Asante, pp. 29-40.

2. Dupuis, op. cit. pp. 230-1; F. Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti (London 1921) pp. 22-3.

3. Haring (EC) to Amsterdam, 15 August 1712, WIC 101.

4. Fynn, Asante, p. 45.

Gold Coast.<sup>1</sup> This suggests either a thaw in or suspension of the tension with Kotoku. The relaxation was, however, temporary. The absence of the Asante army from home implied a degree of an unprotected state in which Asante was. Apenten seems to have decided to attack relatively weak Asante before its army could return from Aowin. Thus while during the first nine months of 1715, it was known on the coast that Ofori of Abuakwa was poised against Akwamu or Agona, some of the Europeans were also aware in the last quarter of 1715 that "Akim Caboceer Apintin is posing himself in a position to make war against the Zaay of Ashantys."<sup>2</sup> Haring, the Dutch Director-General, for example, expressed great surprise at the split in the Akyem objectives.<sup>3</sup> But there it was. The Asante bogey had vitiated Abuakwa-Kotoku aggression against the southern and the coast states.

Osei Tutu reacted sharply to Apenten's threat. From Aowin he quickly recalled the army in order to redeploy it against perhaps the greatest of his enemies. In December 1715 the Dutch at Axim noted that "all the Ashantyns, Warsaws ..... are on their way back home [from Aowin] at the urgent request of the Zay who has summoned them very urgently, as the Akims [Kotoku] are threatening him with a major war".<sup>4</sup>

1. Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 176; Fynn, Asante pp. 42-45.

2. Doutreleau (Accra) to Haring (EC), 10 October 1715 NBKG 82. 'Zaay' i.e. Osei (Tutu).

3. Haring to Doutreleau, 16 October 1715, NBKG, 82.

2. Butler (Axim) to Haring (EC), 13 December 1715, NBKG 82.



For one reason or another the Akyem (Kotoku) - Asante war did not break out till 1717. It is possible that Apenten had not expected Asante to know of his hostile plans and react so quickly by recalling its army campaigning in Aowin. Hence his delay to attack. It is equally possible that each party spent the interval in getting allies, or at least to obtain the neutrality of other states. In fact there was an Akyem-Asante competition for alliance with Akwamu for example.<sup>1</sup>

By 1717 aggression had passed from Apenten to Osei Tutu. In January that year information reaching the coast was that "The Zaay of Ashanty has taken the field against Akim [Kotoku] and Dinkiran".<sup>2</sup>

By October 1717 the Akyem forces had inflicted on Asante perhaps the greatest defeat<sup>3</sup> it had ever suffered or was to suffer. Among Asante losses were Osei Tutu himself and the cream of Asante aristocracy.<sup>4</sup> For Akyem it was a Pyrrhic victory: Kotokuhene Apenten lost his life.<sup>5</sup> But that did not radically detract from the Akyem victory.

1. Landman (Komenda) to EC, 13 January 1717, NBKG 84; cf also Johnson (CCC) to RAC, 26 May 1717, T70/6/48; Snoek (Accra) to EC, 29 May 1717, NBKG 84; Phipps to RAC, 25 September 1717, cited by Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 176 n. 1.
2. Van Alzen (Accra) to EC, 30 October; Letter from Apam, 5 November; EC Journal, entry, 7 November 1717, NBKG 84.
3. Van Alzen to EC, 30 October; Letter from Apam, 5 November; EC Journal, entry, 7 November 1717, NBKG 84.
4. Bowdich, A Mission, p. 233; Dupuis, A Residence, pp. 231-2; Reindorf, History, pp. 66-7; Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty, p. 23; Fynn, Asante, pp. 48-50. Fynn discusses the conflicting views about the dating of Osei Tutu's death. The present author, in the light of his own researches, as demonstrated above, accepts Fynn's conclusion that Osei Tutu died in 1717.
5. Van Alzen's Report, 30 October 1717.

A number of factors contributed to this signal success of Akyem against the military might of Asante. The Asante themselves did much, though inadvertently, to contribute to the Akyem success. The Asante advance was relaxed and over-confident. Asante tradition, as recorded by Bowdich and Dupuis more than a hundred years after the event, recalls that Osei Tutu and the flower of the Asante aristocracy did not start off for the war front with the main army. He and his retinue tracked the army "at a leisurely pace". Moreover the Asante strategists had made no attempt to keep secret their proposed line of march. They confided their plans to the Akwamu who were supposed to have undertaken to direct the Asante army the best way to surprise the Akyem forces. According to Butler's report,

"the Ashantees, depending on the friendship and alliance of the Aquamboe King, divided their forces to seek the supposed place of advantage which the Aquamboe King had chosen for them, but he in the meantime informed the Akims of it [the Asante move]." <sup>1</sup>

Excellent Akyem (Kotoku) sharp shooters stationed themselves on the banks of the Pra near the village of Akromante or Kormante, and there succeeded in assassinating Osei and cutting down his retinue almost to a man. <sup>2</sup>

Butler's report implies a charge of treachery against Akwamu. It is therefore relevant to consider what must have obliged Akwamu to betray its traditional friend. <sup>3</sup>

Though differences still existed between them, it appears that by February 1717 the Akyem states had reached

1. Butler to Van Naerssen, 3 November 1718, NBKG 85.
2. Asante tradition, as recorded by Bowdich, Mission, p. 233 and Dupuis, A Residence, pp. 231-2.
3. Ward, History, p. 115.

some kind of understanding with Akwamu. The passage of Akyem traders through Akwamu territory to the Ga coast trade suggests this: in that month, Prince Amo, the Akwamu Resident Commissioner for Ga Province, led a group of Akyem traders into Fort Grevecoeur, and presumably other forts, to purchase war stores.<sup>1</sup> Besides, Akwamuhene Akonno allowed the Akyem states to send some of their women and children - perhaps these were of the Akyem royal houses - to Akwamu for asylum and protection.<sup>2</sup> These were clear indications of some kind of an Akyem-Akwamu rapprochement. Thus there seems to have been a shift in Akwamu foreign policy in favour of the Akyem states against Asante. This would negate Butler's assertion of the existence of Asante-Akwamu friendship. But Butler's claim cannot be dismissed lightly, in view of the traditional friendship between Asante and Akwamu, starting from the time when Osei had not even ascended the Golden Stool. There is enough evidence to show that Akwamu had no intention of keeping faith with either party. There is the assertion that the treachery was Akwamu reply to Asante flirtation with Agona.<sup>3</sup> This view is difficult to accept. It does not tie in well with the common membership of Akwamu and Agona in the southern alliance. It can, of course, be argued that something must have happened between the end of 1716 when the alliance still existed and October 1717 when the Akyem-Asante war took place.

There are two possible alternative and more plausible

- 
1. Snoek (Accra) to EC, 23 February 1717, NBKG 84.
  2. Van Alzen (Accra) to EC, 10 May 1718, NBKG 85.
  3. Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 176.

explanations to the Akwamu conduct. The first is the possibility that at long last Akonno allowed himself to be influenced by the 200 bendas of gold gift from Abuakwa in 1715.<sup>1</sup> He may have even obtained more money, from the Akyem courts. Such 'gifts' would secure Akyem's southern borders while they were at war with Asante in the north. Hence the courage the Akyem had in entrusting Akwamu with the protection of a section of Akyem citizens. The second possible explanation is Akwamu intentions to dupe both Asante and the Akyem states. This is suggested by the fact that Akonno subsequently sold into slavery the Akyem refugees he had undertaken to protect.<sup>2</sup>

But all said and done Akyem war strategy and military strength won the war for them. The philosophy of their strategy would seem to have been to administer surprises to achieve success. According to Van Alzen's report, already quoted extensively, the Akyem destroyed most of their farms where the Asante invading army could have foraged.<sup>3</sup> Deprived of the source of adequate provisions, the invaders had relatively weak resistance to disease. And diseases often broke out during or just after wars in the Gold Coast environment. Consequently when small-pox broke out among them it took a heavy toll of their numbers.<sup>4</sup> Then there was the ambushade. Its success in contriving the

---

1. See p.61 above.

2. Van Alzen (Accra) to EC, 30 October 1717, NBKG 84.

3. It was the practice of Akan armies in war front to find food in the territory of the enemy. Perhaps by now Asante had not evolved the practice of carrying 'Nkyewee' (fried dried corn) in their havarsacks.

4. Van Alzen's Report.

unexpected death of Osei Tutu administered a rude shock to the Asante army, completely demoralising them to the extent of making them decide to stop fighting at once and return home. But when they

"were marching off, the enemies, the Akims ..... decided to pursue the fugitive army with energy. They got into action ..... and victory went to the Akims who did a great slaughter among their enemy."<sup>1</sup>

The Akyem also were reported to have sustained considerable losses.<sup>2</sup>

All the same the Akyem victory had a great impact on the rest of the 'gold' coast. Akyem states and Asante were two political giants in the forest zone; both also wielded considerable influence on the coast. This was because both were engaged in imperialistic provincial expansion with a southward orientation. States already defeated by Asante and reduced to vassalage, saw, in her defeat, an opportunity for rebellion and revenge. Among these were Aowin, Twifo and Wassa. As soon as these heard about the Akyem victory the Aowin and Wassa, for example, began to massacre all Asante subjects they could lay hands on in their territories.<sup>3</sup> There were also rumours, perhaps exaggerated, that Aowin and Wassa had defeated Asante armies in set battles.<sup>4</sup> It seemed that the Akyem states had at long last broken the myth of Asante invincibility, and that the moment had come, for a concerted attack by states which

---

1. Van Alzen's Report.

2. Butler to van Maerssen, 3 November 1718, NBKG 85.

3. Monninkhoven (Axim) to EC, 21 March 1718, NBKG 85.

4. Boerhaven (Kormantse) to EC, 9 April; Van Naerssen (Sekondi) to EC, 17 April 1718, NBKG 85.

had, in one way or another, suffered at the hands of Asante, in order to crush her for ever. For example in April 1718 the Dutch at Komenda received information from

"Caboceer Acaffo of Juffer Twifo ..... that the Ashantins have gone to their country, and that Dinkera, Warsaw, and Juffer, have requested Akim Caboceer Offoerij to join them in an attack on Ashantins in their own country and crush them."<sup>1</sup>

All these were tributary states to Asante. In a way the conduct of some of them were understandable. They had been obliged to fight their master's wars and had suffered much in the process. Twifo and Wassa had fought for Asante against Aowin in 1715-1716; they had apparently fought for her against the Akyem states, because vassalage obliged that they should join the overlords' army in time of war. As for Aowin they had had to pay as much as 250 bendas of gold, and a large number of slaves to appease Asante in the 1715-16 war.<sup>2</sup> But the proposed joint invasion of Asante does not seem to have materialized, even though as late as 1721 there were continued reports of massacres of Asante citizens by these states in the confines of their territories.<sup>3</sup>

Fante reaction to the outcome of the war was to try and side with the victor. Like Wassa and Twifo, they quickly revised their stand in relation to Akyem (Abuakwa). Now they adopted a more friendly attitude towards Akyem, to the extent that immediately after the Asante defeat the two peoples exchanged courtesies. In his report of 30th October, Van

1. Barn (Komenda) to EC, 9 April 1718, NBKG 85.

2. Butler (Axim) to Ec, 5 & 27 November 1715, NBKG 82, cited by Daaku, Trade and Politics p. 177 n.2 Ibenda = £8. 250b. = £2,000.00.

3. Muller (Axim) to EC, 15 & 18 November 1721, NBKG 88.

Alzen said that the Akyem sent, as a present, "the head of a fallen Asante Caboceer to the Braffo of Fante." Among the people of the Gold Coast in general and the Akan in particular such a gesture was accorded only to friends. In view of the very recent hostile attitude of the Southern Alliance, led by Fante, towards Akyem, the Fante must have done something friendlier to deserve such a courtesy from Abuakwa and Kotoku. Probably they had been among the first to send words of congratulation to the conquerors. In any case the Fante appear to have returned the gesture. In April 1718 'Ausi Quansang' [Awusi Kwansa], the chief of Fante coast town of Kormantse, hinted that the Fante confederation "will together march on and defeat Agonna, Addemensa, Creman etc. so that the Akims can have free passage to help them bring gold, slaves and ivory to the forts."<sup>1</sup> It is clear that the Fante were not actuated by genuine regard and friendship for the Akyem states. They anticipated the possibility of Akyem turning their victorious arms to the south, in which case they, after defeating Agona or Akwamu, could drive plenty of trade from the forest to the forts. Friendship with the Abuakwa and Kotoku Courts would thus enable Fante to do business with Akyem.

The change in the Fante attitude provides an index to the effect of the Akyem-Asante war of 1717 on trade. As the Dutch had noted in 1716 all the coastal states derived

---

1. Boerhaven (Kormantse) to Director-General Robberts (EC), 9 April 1718 NBKG 85. Addemensa and Creman are not easily identifiable. Probably by 'Addemensa' the Dutch meant Adamansa, and 'Creman' a mis-spelling for Breman, both in Asikuma. The Akyem would pass through Asikuma if they were going to Fante to trade.

much of their livelihood from the middleman's fees obtained from the forest-to-ports trade. The war threw the entire trade out of gear. For one thing the combatants were the two major pillars of the trade: both were great gold producers, and Asante, in addition, was an excellent ivory hunter, as well as a powerful slave trader. Trade without Abuakwa, Kotoku, and Asante lost its vitality. During the period of the war and for some time after, the absence of these three from the coast trade was greatly felt. For another, even those states not directly involved were afraid of an overflow of the Akyem-Asante war into their territories. These were consequently not prepared to leave their borders unprotected in order to pursue trade. In April 1718 the Dutch summed up the economic situation by saying that trade had been adversely affected

"by the terrible inland war between the districts of Ashantee and Akim, which also keeps all the trading countries like Aowin Warsaw, Accany, Agona and Quamboe in continual commotion, as they dare not leave their countries to come and trade with us on the coast because of fears of invasion [of their own countries]." <sup>1</sup>

It was well that Agona and Akwamu were on the alert. With respect to Agona, Ofori of Abuakwa now had the chance to finish the truncated invasion of early 1716.<sup>2</sup> As for Akwamu, the speculation in October 1717 was that "Caboceer Afforiji ..... will come and demand Akim natives whom Aquando [Akonno] had robbed and sold [into slavery]." <sup>3</sup>

The fears of Agona and Akwamu, though understandable, were not borne out by immediate events. The Asante were a

---

1. EC Diary, entry, 13 April 1718, NBKG 85.

2. See pp. 62-3 above.

3. Van Alzen's Report of 30 October 1717, NBKG 84.



people of remarkable military resilience.<sup>1</sup> They quickly recovered from the first shock of Osei Tutu's death which had led to their subsequent defeat by Kotoku and Abuakwa. They took the field once more, possibly under the command of Opoku Ware, the heir-apparent. Frimpon Manso had succeeded Apenten as the new Kotokuhene. He and Ofori continued the war with Asante who would not accept defeat and vassalage. By as early as the second half of 1718 strains and stresses of the war had begun to tell on the combatants. The fact was that the war had become protracted, and yet neither side was prepared to make the first moves to end it.<sup>2</sup> Eventually weariness and realization that Akwamu had duped both of them obliged Akyem and Asante to conclude that there was need to end the war. In November 1718 the report from Elmina Castle was that "the Ashantees and Akims, seeing themselves as miserably duped by the Aquamboes, have agreed on an armistice ..... Now it is said that they are friends and have jointly decided to avenge themselves on the Aquamboes."<sup>3</sup> They turned the 1718 armistice into a formal peace settlement in the early months of 1719, an arrangement in which neither side seems to have accepted defeat and subservience. In March 1719 the report from Elmina said that "the long war between Ashantees and Akims, after damage on both sides, has at long last, been ended with a durable peace."<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Cf the Asante appellation: Asante Kotoku, kum apem a, apem beba" (The Asante are as daring as the porcupine, they fight in thousands).
  2. Van Alzen (Accra) to EC, 10 May; Muller (Axim) to EC, 8 June 1718, NBKG 85; Director-general Butler (EC) to Amsterdam, 8 August 1718, WIC 104; Van Alzen to EC, 17 August 1718, NBKG 85.
  3. Butler (EC) to Van Naenssen (Axim), 3 November 1718, NBKG 85.
  4. Butler to Amsterdam, 27 March 1719, WIC 108.

As far as Akyem-Asante relations were concerned the 1719 Peace Settlement proved quite durable. It was not until 1742 that the two peoples clashed in war again.<sup>1</sup> But in relation to the country as a whole there was no real peace. The Dutch were aware of this. For in his despatch of 27 March 1719, the Dutch Director-General at Elmina Castle further observed that in spite of peace between the Akyem states and Asante

"other quarrels have arisen. The Juffers, Warsaws and Aowins, during the aforementioned war [1717] plundered the Ashantees of some of their women ..... and burned down an Ashantee village called Atwee. They must now account for it."

And they did. By 1721 Asante had descended on those states.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile rumours of imminent Akyem invasion of the south, especially Agona, kept circulating. But nothing very dramatic happened, except one or two sporadic raids Ofori Panin organized against Akwamu in 1722 and 1723.<sup>3</sup> This continued to be the general pattern of relations between Abuakwa and Kotoku on the one hand, and the southern states on the other. The fundamental cause was Kotoku's lack of interest in the southern question, at least during the early 1720s. In 1724 one Dutch report described Frimpon Manso, the new Kotokuhene, as a cautious ruler who was not too keen on Akyem aggression against Akwamu because he was not sure what

---

1. See Chapter 3 pp.112-117 below.

2. Butler & Council (EC) to Amsterdam, 1 November 1721; Muller (Axim) to EC, 15 & 18 November 1721 (NBKG 88); cf also Daaku, Trade & Politics, p. 172; Fynn, Asante pp. 55-56.

3. Letter from Hortman, 7 May 1722, NBKG 89; de Crane & L. Beun (EC) to Amsterdam, 17 September 1723, WIC 105.

the reaction of Asante might be.<sup>1</sup> Deprived of Kotoku co-operation Ofori of Abuakwa had no confidence to invade either Akwamu or Agona.

He died in 1727,<sup>2</sup> leaving the Southern Question unsolved. The divergent views of the two Akyem states had militated against the achievement of their political and economic objectives.

Right from the beginning of the eighteenth century, Abuakwa and Kotoku, severally and jointly, pursued a foreign policy that was on the whole very aggressive to their neighbours. Political and economic ambitions dictated the policy. The same interests prevailed in the neighbouring states in varying degrees. Consequently there were wars and alarms of wars. Alliances were contracted, only to be lightly abandoned for immediate advantages. By the early 1720s the Akyem states had secured a relaxation in the political and military pressures from Asante in the north, through a peace arrangement. But the southern states continued to have a stranglehold on Akyem's political and economic interests in the south, because fundamentally Abuakwa and Kotoku failed to organize a sustained and concerted action against them.

---

1. Beun & Council (EC) to Amsterdam, 8 January 1724, WIC 105.

2. Phal (CCO) to Copenhagen, 14 April 1727 (Vqk 121: breve og dokumenter fra Guinea, 1717-1732).

### CHAPTER 3

#### AKYEM ASCENDANCY IN THE SOUTH-EAST, 1728-1742

The main direction of the foreign policy of Abuakwa and Kotoku up to 1727 had been towards the coast. But in 1727 when Ofori, the chief architect of this policy, died, it looked as if the Akyem states would never be able to break the stranglehold of Akwamu and other southern states on the coast-bound Akyem trade.

The situation, however, changed after 1727. Modification in Asante attitude was a factor which contributed to the change. Pressure from Asante to the north had been a major adverse element militating against the efforts of Abuakwa and Kotoku to solve the southern question. From about 1727, however, Asante became more preoccupied with attempts to gain access to the European trade on the western sector of the coast.<sup>1</sup> The diversion in the Asante drive to the coast had, by 1728, eased the pressure on Abuakwa and Kotoku and given the two Akyem states a good opportunity to deal effectively with Akwamu and thereby prepare their rise in the south-east.

A consequence of the relaxation in the Akyem-Asante tension was the change in the attitude of Kotoku to the southern question. During the early 1720s Kotohene Frimpon Manso had been extremely cautious about joining Abuakwa leaders in solving it for fear of arousing unfavourable reaction from Asante.<sup>2</sup> In the late 1720s, however, he

---

1. Fynn, Asante, pp. 63-7.

2. See Chapter 2, pp. 77 - 78      above.

became more favourably disposed to involvement in the south. Probably he was the Akyem ruler who in 1727 was reported to have nearly bought Asante neutrality in order to go to war against Akwamu.<sup>1</sup> By 1729 he and Abuakwa leaders had reached complete agreement to make a concerted assault on Akwamu.

Events in Akwamu itself made an attack on her all the more attractive. Akwamu was experiencing political instability in both the metropolis and the provinces. Trouble had been brewing since 1702. In that year Ga restiveness compelled Akwamuhene Akono to send a punitive expedition to the Accra area.<sup>2</sup> Again in 1716 the Ga refused to serve in an Akwamu army detailed to go to the aid of Agona against an invading force from Akyem Abuakwa.<sup>3</sup> The attitude of the Ga so annoyed the Akwamuhene that he resolved to punish them after the storm from Akyem had subsided.<sup>4</sup> But he was not able to do this before instability in the empire worsened.

Two provincial revolts occurred, and these combined with Akyem hostility to spell the doom of Akwamu. The tyranny of Nyanoase, the capital, contributed to the provincial revolts. The Akwamu rulers themselves habitually raided the provinces for slaves.<sup>5</sup> Provincial administrators

1. Roem (Apam) to EC, 10 January 1727, NBKG. 94; Wilks, M.A. Thesis, p. 80 n.2.

2. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 65.

3. See Chapter 2, p. 62 above.

4. Hendrix (Apam) to Director-General Haring (EC), 26 March 1716, NBKG 82.

5. Romer, Tilforladlig, pp 106 and 121-2.

like Amaga in Ladoku were wont to govern harshly.<sup>1</sup> Consequently in 1727 the Ga and Akuapem revolted, and for the next three years fought a war of independence against their overlords.

Had the malaise been limited to provincial Akwamu alone, perhaps the situation would have been less serious for her. There was disunity in metropolitan Akwamu itself, brought about by<sup>2</sup> succession dispute after Akono's death in 1725. There had been two leading claimants, one Ansa Kwao and Amo. For many years the latter had been the Akwamu Resident Commissioner for the Ga district. He had apparently entertained high hopes of being chosen to occupy the stool after Akono's death. But the lot fell on his rival. Disappointment, frustration, anger, and possibly Dutch influence, drove him into the camp of the Akuapem-Ga rebels. Dutch influence on Amo's decision is suggested by the enthusiasm with which the Dutch in the Ga area welcomed a report from Amo in 1729 that Abuakwa and Kotoku had agreed to give military assistance to the rebels.<sup>2</sup> Thus by 1729 the Akwamu empire was on the verge of collapse. Both internal and external enemies had joined hands to bring about its fall.

It should be added, however, that with respect to the Akyem the request for military assistance from the Akuapem and the Ga merely acted as a spark in a powder

---

1. Phal (CCO) to Copenhagen, 14 April 1727, Vgk 122; de la Planque (Accra) to EC, 30 July, 9 and 13 September 1729, NBKG 95; Wilks, M.A. Thesis, pp. 87-90.

2. De la Planque (Accra) to EC, 13 September 1729, NBKG 95; Phal (CCO) to Copenhagen, 30 August 1730; Waroe (CCO) to EC, 30 August 1730, Vgk 122.

magazine. The Akyem states already had an axe to grind against Akwamu. Akwamu had not as yet accounted for the Akyem subjects whom the late Akono had sold into slavery in the 1717-1719 period.<sup>1</sup> Romer, a Danish official at Christiansborg Castle in the 1730s, thought that this was the immediate cause of the 1729-30 Akyem invasion of Akwamu.<sup>2</sup> And of course in their conflict with Akwamu the Akyem states had imperial and economic motives. Knowledge about existing Akyem-Akwamu tension must have encouraged the Akuapem-Ga rebels to appeal to Baa Kwante of Abuakwa and Frimpon Manso of Kotoku for help.

By mid-1729 the Abuakwa-Kotoku forces were poised for the invasion. The sources so far consulted do not give any indications regarding the military strengths of the combatants. But the Akyem forces must have been formidable, considering that just when the war was about to begin a section of the Akwamu informed Gomoahene "Kujse Adoo" [Kusi Adu] that they were afraid to face the army of the Akims and so they have decided to flee their country "as soon as fighting begins."<sup>3</sup> Besides being powerful themselves, Abuakwa and Kotoku increased their fighting strength by obtaining allied assistance from Assin, while at one stage Agona and Fante also expressed willingness to join in the attack on Akwamu.<sup>4</sup>

1. See Chapter 2, p. 75 above.

2. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 151.

3. Gawron (Apam) to EC, 6 October 1729, NBKG 95. Reindorf, History, p. 63, calls the Gomoahene Kusa Adu. It is clear that friendly relations existed between Akwamu and Gomoa.

4. Blittersdorp (Accra) to D-General Pranger (EC), 5 September; Gawron (Apam) to Pranger, 17 September, 1730, NBKG 97.

At least the last two had been friends and allies of Akwamu in the 1710s.<sup>1</sup> Alliances were indeed fleeting and transient in the political milieu of eighteenth century Gold Coast.

Just before the Akyem entry the rebels had their backs to the wall.<sup>2</sup> The entry of Abuakwa and Kotoku saved the Akuapem and the Ga rebels from imminent suppression. An Akyem army, under the command of Safori, otherwise known as Ofori Dua or Ofori Kuma,<sup>3</sup> was sent to assist Akuapem directly. The main Akyem force, under the joint command of Kotokuhene Frimpon Manso, Abuakwahene Baa Kwante, and his heir-apparent Owusu Akyem,<sup>4</sup> invaded Akwamu itself directly in September 1729. As soon as battle was joined,

"three principal [Akwamu] Caboceers, with all their subjects, fled to the Crepee Country; but as they could not cross the Volta [quickly], the Hill people [i.e. the Akuapem] fell on them and killed many of them."<sup>5</sup>

These probably included that section of Akwamu who had disclosed to the Gomoa their intention to flee their country as soon as the war started.<sup>6</sup>

1. Agona and Fante withdrawal from the alliance with Akwamu was bound to affect the latter's military strength.
2. De la Planque (Accra) to EC, 9, 13 and 21 September 1729, NBKG 95. The view that the Akyem entry occurred in mid-1730 seems incorrect. Cf. Wilks, M.A. Thesis pp. 109-110; Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, p. 31.
3. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, p. 92; Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, p. 37.
4. Gawron (Apam) to EC, 17 September 1730, NBKG 97; AAT: Asafo & Maase (1925/6); An Award in Asamankese-Akim Abuakwa Arbitration in 1929, cited by Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, p. 37 n. 3.
5. De la Planque (Accra) to EC, 10 October 1729, NBKG 95.
6. Cf. p. 82 n. 3 above.



This early setback did not completely demoralise the whole Akwamu army. Those who remained behind fought on gallantly, occasionally driving the Akyem forces to near exhaustion in war stores.<sup>1</sup> But to discerning observers the outcome was not in doubt. In September 1730 information reaching the coast said the Akyem invaders had taken possession of all Akwamu except the capital; that for the assault on Nyanoase, they were only awaiting additional support from the Fante and Agona who had sent to express desire to take part in the assault.<sup>2</sup> The Akyem stormed the Akwamu capital in or about the third week of September without the expected Fante and Agona support.<sup>3</sup> The outcome was as the Dutch, for example, had expected. On 21st September 1730 the Dutch commandant at Fort Lydzemheid at Apam thus reported to Elmina Castle: "This is just to tell you that my Foetoe Ɛfutu servant has just arrived straight ..... from Aquamboe. He tells me that the whole of Aquamboe has been defeated by Akim, and the King Ɔf Akwamu taken prisoner and put in irons. The whole country is now in the possession of the Akims."<sup>4</sup> Tradition also remembers this Akyem victory.<sup>5</sup>

Dutch delight at the outcome of the war, as indicated in Gawron's report just quoted above, was not

- 
1. Gawron to EC, noted in E.C. Journal, entry, 11 August 1730, NBKG 97.
  2. Gawron & EC, quoted in E.C. Journal, entry 17 September 1730, NBKG.97.
  3. For a discussion of the non-participation of the Agona and Fante in the attack on Nyanaose, see p. 110 below.
  4. Quoted in EC Journal, entry, 21 September 1730, NBKG 97.
  5. Traditional history of Abuakwa, as told Stromberg in 1863 at Kyebi. Cf. Stromberg (Kyebi) to Basel, 24 January 1863, BMA - PJC. See Also Wilks, M.A. Thesis; Kwamena-Poh, Government pp. 37-38.

without cause. Since the beginning of the century they had looked forward to seeing the day when Akyem arms would prevail over Akwamu. Apparently they must have rejoiced that at long last the Akwamu stranglehold on the rich gold trade from Akyem to the coast had been broken.

For the Akwamu ruling house flight was the only alternative to total submission and vassalage to the Akyem. Already some of the Akwamu had sought safety in trans-Volta district as early as 1729.<sup>1</sup> Those who survived capture or death in the 1730 phase of the war fled to trans-Volta too. Here they founded a new home. This is the Akwamu state as we know it today. The founding of the Akwamu state in trans-Volta was thus a direct outcome of the defeat suffered at the hands of the Akyem in 1730.

Politically the Akwamu were a very ambitious people. Defeat and deprivation of their old home did not totally dampen their spirits. In trans-Volta they tried to influence inter-state relations with a view to establishing a political domination similar to what they had enjoyed in pre-1730 south-eastern Gold Coast west of the Volta. But they only succeed in increasing, both in scope and intensity, the conflicts already existing in the region.<sup>2</sup>

The flight of the remnant royal lineage of Akwamu to the trans-Volta paved the way for Akyem ascendancy in the south-east. By fleeing, the fugitive Akwamu lineage endorsed the abandonment of their imperial possessions west of the Volta. The ex-Akwamu imperial provinces included Kwawu,

---

1. See p. 83 above.

2. R. A. Kea, "Akwamu-Anlo Relations, 1730-1813", in THSG Vol. X (1969) pp. 29-64.

Kamana (i.e. the Guan-Kyerepon communities inhabiting what is now the Begoro division of Abuakwa), Akuapem, Ga Adangbe and Krobo. By virtue of victory Abuakwa and Kotoku took possession of all these provinces in addition to the remnant of pre-1730 metropolitan Akwamu (hereafter referred to in this study as Old Akwamu<sup>1</sup>). Now Akyem political authority extended from the mouth of the Ayensu river near Winneba in the west to the Volta estuary in the east, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles; and from the shores of the Atlantic to river Anum, some one hundred and forty miles inland.

The emergence of Akuapem as an organized state on the Akan pattern was another direct result of the 1729-1730 war. The Akuapem of course accepted the imperial authority of the Akyem. But they went one step further. Until 1730 these people had consisted of petty Guan, Kyerepon and Akan communities living almost independently of one another. After the Nyanoase war, as tradition calls the 1729-1730 war, they reached a consensus and invited Safori of Abuakwa, their immediate liberator, to become their paramount chief.<sup>2</sup>

Continued fear of Akwamu seems to have been the fundamental motive behind the Akuapem invitation to Safori or Ofori Kuma. This is suggested by a Dutch complaint in December 1730, made probably on behalf of the Akuapem and the Ga, that the Akyem had spent only one-fifth of the time

---

1. Vis-a-vis New or Trans-Volta Akwamu.

2. Anonymous, Twi Kasamu Akuapem ne Eho Nsem anase Abasem (Akropon 1913); Akuffo, Ahemfie, p. 5; Wilks, in Vansina & Co., The Historian, p. 405; AAT: Kyebi (1968/9); Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, pp. 45-49..

they had contracted to assist the Akuapem and the Ga.<sup>1</sup> Since by then the surviving leaders of the defeated Akwamu were in trans-Volta, the Dutch query can only suggest the continued fear of the Akuapem and the Ga that the Akwamu, even in their new home beyond the Volta river, might again try to attack from across the river; it was therefore unsafe to dispense with the services of the Akyem. At least the presence of Safori as King of all Akuapem would act as an insurance against their former tyrants, should they wish to re-open hostilities. It is equally possible that the Akuapem made the Akyem prince their king in lieu of the fee they had to pay to the Akyem for the military assistance against Akwamu. They may have found it difficult getting the money. The Ga, for example, could not raise theirs and had to approach the Danish, Dutch and English trading companies for loans in order to meet their indebtedness to the Akyem.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the motive behind the invitation, the Akyem Abuakwa war chief formed the various petty Guan-Kyerepon and pre-1730 Akyem communities in Akuapem into a single unitary polity on the Akan pattern. At the head was the dynasty established by Safori or Ofori Kuma. The dynasty created by Safori has ruled the Akuapem state to this day. Thus Akuapem as an organized state owes much to

---

1. D.G. Pranger (EC) to Blittersdorp (Accra), 13 December 1730, NBKG 97.

2. See p. 99 below.

Abuakwa for its origins.<sup>1</sup> It is an example of what ethnic admixture and inter-state exchange of political ideas could positively lead to. In spite of the establishment of an Abuakwa dynasty there, Akuapem seems to have come under the direct over-rule of Abuakwa.<sup>2</sup>

Almost the whole of the Ga-Adangbe district also came under Abuakwa overlordship. This district was made up of the Ga states, Ladoku, Ada and Krobo. Owusu Akyem, heir-apparent to the Abuakwa stool, was made governor of Ga-Adangbe and Akuapem.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. For a full discussion of the subject see Wilks in Vansina etc., The Historian, also Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, pp. 39-41. While Kwamena-Poh is inclined to accept the view that the Akyem Abuakwa created Akuapem into a unitary state, Wilks argues quite well that an organized Akuapem state already existed before the 1730s. Whatever stand one takes, the imposition of the Akyem, as the paramount authority, on the Akuapem seems to be incontrovertible.
  2. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 158.
  3. De la Planque & Blittersdorp (Accra) to EC, 30 October 1730, NBKG 97; Waroe (CCO) to Copenhagen, 24 and 28 December 1730 and 27 September 1731, Vgk 122; Minutes of Council Meeting (EC), 15 May 1732, NBKG 98; Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 158; R. Biorn, Beretning om de Danske Forter og Negerier paa Guineakystem (Copenhagen, 1788) p. 208. Romer and Biorn as well as Abuakwa traditional historians claim that Owusu Akyem was one of the Abuakwa Kings of the eighteenth century. This is wrong. In fact Romer who appears to have been the first to create this impression was confused on the subject. Sometimes he referred to Owusu as heir to Baa Kwante (Cf. op. cit. p. 168), at others as king. Reindorf (History, p. 348) and Danguah (Akan Law, Appx D) appear to have based their view on the wrong notion of Romer. J. K. Fynn is correct in thinking that Owusu was not one of the Abuakwa Kings Cf. "Akim Abuakwa King List: A Chronology."

Kotoku obtained the principality of Osu.<sup>1</sup> This small province appears to have become a source of conflict between Kotoku and Abuakwa during the 1732-1734 period, as the latter tried to add it to its other provinces.<sup>2</sup> There is an indication that Kotoku gained Kwawu as another imperial province. Oda tradition asserts that Kotoku kings, since the reign of Frimpon Manso, were wont to regard Kwawu rulers as "wives."<sup>3</sup> Among the Akan, jocular marital relations implied cordial relations in which the "wife" regarded the "husband" as superior. The relationship suggested by the Oda tradition is of this type. Probably it is a reference to vassal - overlord relationship between Kwawu and Kotoku, traceable to the 1730s. A strong name of Kotoku Kings is "Oko-fro-Boo" (Conqueror-of-the-Hills), possibly another allusion to Kotoku over-rule with respect to Kwawu, a hilly district.

Whether Kotoku did or did not obtain Kwawu as an imperial province, it is clear that Abuakwa received the larger share. Kotoku's share was not commensurate to its contribution to the conquest of Akwamu. Probably Kotoku did not wish to be saddled with the task of administering provinces far removed from the metropolis but limited itself to obtaining the Osu principality which would enable it to easily acquire "Dane-guns,"<sup>4</sup> for which the Akyem seem to have had a great liking.

The acquisition of an empire brought considerable

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 161.

2. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 80.

3. AKT: Adoagyir; (1968/9).

4. Cf. p. 115 below.

prosperity to the Akyem. Tributes and taxes were imposed on the subject states. Ground-rents for the forts, castles, and lodges on the Ga-Adangbe coast went to Banso and Oda. While Abuakwa rulers collected those from James Fort and Crevecoeur, the Kotokuhene received the rent for Christiansborg Castle. The Akyem also gained in many other ways. The European traders were wont to send them gifts - dashes as they were usually called. In late 1736, for example, the Abuakwahene received twenty bendas of gold from the Danes for allowing them to go ahead with plans to build fort Fredensborg at Ningo.<sup>1</sup> The English had plans to put up a lodge at "Prangprang" (Prampram), and apparently appealed to the Abuakwahene for permission to build the lodge. They must have made some kind of payment to the Akyem ruler. In 1740, however, the Danes and the Dutch together sent a protest to the Abuakwa Court against the plans of the English.<sup>2</sup> A gift would by all means accompany such a protest. Even after 1742 when the Akyem ceased to be overlords of the Ga district, the Danes for example, still found them so important that Christiansborg Castle authorities continued to give Akyem leaders gifts. By early nineteenth century these gifts were being described

- 
1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 158. Romer recalls how Prince Owusu Akyem shaved the hair of his head, added 8 oz. of gold to it, and gave it to the Danes to be buried under the foundations of the Fort. Norregaard (Danish Settlements, p. 97) mentions the Danish negotiation with the Akyem, especially Owusu Akyem (Orsu of Norregaard's) but does not add the details Romer provides.
  2. Kuiji (Accra) to E.C., 4 and 19 December 1740, Breven og, Papieren van der Kust van Guinea (BPKG) 1740-41.

as regular salaries.<sup>1</sup>

The Akyem must have also derived great benefit from trade which prospered during their ascendancy. The European traders on the coast found the Akyem domination in south-eastern Gold Coast quite congenial to trade. For besides the necessary overall peace which Abuakwa and Kotoku imposed in the region, the Akyem themselves were great drivers of trade from the interior to the coast.

Strong evidence has been adduced to establish that by the 1730s trade on the Gold Coast had shifted from a gold-based to a slave orientated one,<sup>2</sup> with the bulk of the slaves finding their way across the Atlantic to the Americas and West Indies. It might therefore be tempting to conclude that all states and peoples of the Gold Coast participated fully in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This is generally true. But the Akyem were particularly not keen participants in this trade, as they demonstrated after the 1729-1730 war. Europeans on the coast then had expected the victorious Akyem to march the Akwamu prisoners-of-war to the coast and sell them to the trans-Atlantic slavers. But this the Kotoku and the Abuakwa did not do: instead they sent the captives to Akyem in order to swell their country's population.<sup>3</sup> Danish opinion confirms the Dutch. Romer was an official at Christiansborg castle in the 1730s. Writing in the 1760s he commented that most Africans sold their prisoners of war but the Akyem kept and grafted them on

---

1. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 208.

2. Walter Rodney, "Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast," in T H SG Vol. X pp. 13-38.

3. Pranger & Council (EC) to Amsterdam, 1 March 1731 (Furley Collection).



native lineages by eventually manumitting and regarding them as free-born members of Akyem society.<sup>1</sup> This negative attitude of the Akyem towards the Atlantic slave trade was unique in the Gold Coast. In the whole of West Africa a parallel could be found only in contemporary Dahomey where the ruling house at Abomey, for reasons other than those of the Akyem, were at one time not favourably inclined towards the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>2</sup>

The disinclination of Abuakwa and Kotoku towards the trans-Atlantic trade, however, did not prevent them from practising slavery in their own country. In this respect they were no different from European slavers. Just as the Europeans travelled to Africa south of the Sahara to procure slaves, so did the Akyem undertake expeditions to neighbouring districts, especially Krepi, to either raid for or purchase slaves.<sup>3</sup>

Military and economic considerations dictated the objectives of slavery in Akyem. Slaves rendered military services in war time,<sup>4</sup> and in peace time provided a cheap labour force for the extractive industry and long distance trade. Contemporary evidence leaves room for no doubt that the gold industry formed the backbone of Akyem economy in

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 158.

2. I. A. Akinjogbin, Dahomey and Its Neighbours, 1708-1818, (CUP 1967) p. 24.

3. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 167.

4. Ibid., p. 158.

both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Akyem used three methods in searching for gold. These were surface collection after heavy rainfall, collection from river beds by scooping the sedentary sand, and thirdly digging for gold.<sup>1</sup> All three methods, especially mining, required ample labour force. Romer gives a detailed account of Akyem mining method in the eighteenth century.

He writes:

"According to what our Accras and the Akims tell us, the Akyem dig holes in the ground wherever they please, making sure, however, that it is a good distance from the towns and not too close to the footpaths, so that their children and animals may not fall into them. They make landings about three feet high (half a man's length) in order that they may pass the tray or vessel (with the soil which they have dug from the ground) to each other. While Europeans dig 'streets' underground and prop them up ..... and have windlasses to hoist their ore etc. the Akims simply dig a slanting hole into the ground which look like a staircase, each step being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  allen high.

If after having dug 6-10 allen they find that the soil is not rich, they start digging elsewhere. Sometimes, however, they bring a trayful of earth to the water to test it. If they do not hit a rich soil by the time they have dug a hole 10 allen deep ..... or 8 landings, their effort has been in vain ..... they go to another place to start digging afresh.

Yet they seldom fail to find rich soil ..... and in most cases it is so rich that each of the workers delivers 8 oz. every day, which is considered the minimum of what the master will accept."

Romer states further that at least an average of forty workers were needed on one pit. For, besides the diggers at the bottom of the pit, between thirty and sixty others were expected to stand on the stairs and pass trays to and from their colleagues at the bottom of the mines. On 'bonanza'

---

1. J. B. Danquah, Akim Abuakwa Handbook, p. 8.

mines still larger numbers were required as the digging usually went deeper and deeper down.

The evidence from Romer suggests that the Akyem controlled production with a view to keeping supply at a reasonable level. At one time, Romer writes, "Frempong's men found a whole rock of gold in a mine. This was reported to the King and he was asked whether they should take chisels, as the travat [i.e. the tornado] season was approaching. Frempong consulted his great men and the resolution was that this rock must be the mother or father of the small gold; nobody was therefore to touch it; the men should leave that mine and start at another place."<sup>1</sup> Romer attributed the resolution of the Kotoku leaders to abandon this rich gold mine to stupidity and superstition.<sup>2</sup> Romer's conclusion is quite perceptive because even now there are people in some parts of Asante Akyem who would believe that gold must be a god if it occurred in a large quantity. But this did not prevent people from making use of troves. The real motive behind the resolution of Kotokuhene Frimpon Manso and his councillors was to prevent the King's miners, who were generally slaves, from acquiring any part of the rock gold they had just discovered. Had they been allowed to extract the gold the miners would have secretly kept part of it and thereby would have increased gold supply on the market. Increase in supply would of course lower the price of gold. Hence the sanction prescribed by the Kotokuhene. Among the peoples of the Gold Coast to invoke superstition was the best means of

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 197.

2. Ibid.

making a sanction work.

Romer's detailed information above was representative of European interest in the Akyem gold industry. Throughout the eighteenth century the name 'Akim' was almost synonymous with gold to Europeans in and outside Gold Coast. At the beginning of the century the Akyem district was said by Bosman to furnish "as large quantities of gold as any land that I know and that also the most valuable and pure of any that is carried from this coast: it is easily distinguished by its deep colour. Accra at present carries away the greatest part of this metal from hence."<sup>1</sup> In the 1730s the Akyem sent only "few slaves" but "plenty gold" to the coast for sale.<sup>2</sup> Thirty years later the district was described as a great source of gold.<sup>3</sup> Sufficient labour was required to exploit the sources.

Slave labour was also required for long distance trade. The strong purchasing power which the possession of gold placed in their hands, made it possible for the Akyem to undertake long distance trading, particularly to the coast, from which place only they could obtain firearms and other European manufactured goods. Escorting and portage were the two major areas of trade where slaves were employed. The trade routes were not wholly free from highway robbing and raiding.<sup>4</sup> The Akyem solution to this problem was the

1. Bosman, Description, p. 78.

2. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 164.

3. Atlas de l'Asie et de l'Afrique (1764) No. 104, cited by G. Macdonald, The Gold Coast Past and Present (London 1898) p. 121 footnote.

4. Dutch Reports in March 1714 (Furley Collection, Legon).

caravan system of organizing 'foreign' trade. An Akyem caravan could contain as many as two thousand men.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting aspect of the Akyem caravan system was collective bargaining. On arrival at the coast the master traders went to the forts to negotiate with the merchants on the prices of the various articles the Akyem traders intended to buy. The bargaining could last up to four days. As long as the bargaining continued so long would the Akyem traders refrain from buying.<sup>2</sup> Purchasing proceeded briskly as soon as prices were agreed upon between the European sellers and the African customers.

The Akyem bought all sorts of things from the coast, but they gave top priority to a few of them. Among these were salt, textiles, knives, iron, drinks and above all firearms and ammunition. Constant inter-state warfare explained the great importance they attached to guns and other munitions of war.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes Akyem traders to the coast bought nothing but these. In 1741 the Dutch at Accra had to please them by asking for more stock from Elmina Castle because the Akyem were buying nothing else.<sup>4</sup> The ruling house of Abuakwa, led by Baa Kwante also purchased large quantities of drinks from the coast, especially Danish Flensborger corn brandy for which he had a particular liking.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 164.

2. Ibid., p. 165.

3. Ibid., pp. 165-7, Cf. also Chapter 1, pp. 39-41 above.

4. Kuijl (Accra) to Director-General J. Baron des Bordes (EC), 13 September 1741, NBKG 105.

5. Romer, Tilforladlig, pp. 165-6.

Trade in south-eastern Gold Coast, on the whole, prospered under the Akyem domination. Some of the European traders, the Danes for example, were sorry when the hegemony came to an end in 1742. "We [Danes]", Romer wrote in the 1760s, "could have earned enough in those years to cover all our costs for some fifty years. We did not [then] need to take our goods out ourselves for sale as we have had to do recently; nor did we need the services of up to forty African agents in the interior of the country, as is now the practice".<sup>1</sup>

Success and prosperity of course created their own problems for Abuakwa and Kotoku. Some of the European trading companies were wont to be trouble makers; occasional provincial revolts broke out; and above all the success of the Akyem aroused the jealousy of neighbours. All these had to be dealt with. The most immediate problem, however, was the provincial administration, an altogether new thing to the Akyem. They did not evolve a uniform system as the Akwamu had done before them. In their imperial days the Akwamu adopted the system of residential governorship for their provinces. For example Prince Amo, as already shown, was accredited to the Ga district, while Amaga, another prince, governed Ladoku.<sup>2</sup> The Akyem combined non-residential governorship and indirect rule. As stated already, Owusu Akyem, for example was governor of Ga-Adangbe and Akuapem.

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 171.

2. See pp.80-81 above. For the most recent discussion of Akwamu provincial administration see Kea, R. A. Trade, State Formation and Warfare on the Gold Coast, 1600-1826, Ph.D. Thesis, London University 1974 (Unpub.), especially pp. 223-275.

He resided in none of these provinces. Nor was any resident governor appointed for Old Akwamu. With regards to Old Akwamu the Dutch in Accra hoped in 1730 that the Akyem would govern it directly.<sup>1</sup> But Jan Pranger, the Dutch Director-General at Elmina, a shrewd observer of the situation in the Gold Coast, disabused the minds of his colleagues. He told them: "As regards the Old Quamboe country, you say you want to see the Akims assume ..... the government of it, but that will never happen because it is an established custom of the nations in the Gold Coast that they always leave a part of their defeated enemies in their own country, one of whom they put in authority over it, whom they regard as their tribute paying vassal. The conquerors can live there, if they so wish, but they never share in the government of the conquered territory."<sup>2</sup> Pranger was proved absolutely right. The Abuakwa court appointed one of the Akwamu chiefs who did not migrate to trans-Volta to administer the district. By December 1731 the Abuakwahene "Bacontin Baa Kwante and the native who will govern Old Aquamboe country by order of the Akims" were known to be sending messages to Accra.<sup>3</sup> This chief was called Kwasi Bibri.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary evidence thus substantiates the traditional view that after the Nyanoase war, the pre-1730

---

1. De la Planque (Accra) to D-G Pranger (EC), 10 November 1730, NBKG 97.

2. Pranger to de la Planque & Blittersdorp, 17 November 1730, NBKG 97; also quoted by Fynn, Asante, p. 41.

3. Elet (Accra) to EC, 3 December; EC Journal, entry, 9 December 1731, NBKG 97.

4. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, p. 115.

Akwamu chiefdom came under Abuakwa over-rule.<sup>1</sup>

Relations with the European trading companies on the coast were a set of another problem for the Akyem hegemony. The Dutch for example were a problematic lot. Difficulties with them started right from 1730 when they refused to help the Ga/<sup>to</sup>requite the Akyem leaders for their services against Akwamu in the 1729-30 war. The Ga had promised to pay the Akyem a subsidy of "360 bendas of gold" and "six strings of contre de terre."<sup>2</sup> After the war the Ga could not raise the subsidy on their own. They approached the European trading companies for loans which would enable them meet the commitment to the Akyem. The Danes and the English obliged but the Dutch refused to give out the loan; arguing that the Ga might not pay it back.<sup>3</sup> Of course payment of the subsidy was the direct responsibility of the Ga, but the Dutch decision not to help the Ga did not augur well for Akyem-Dutch relations, considering that the Danes and the English readily helped the Ga.

A direct friction seems to have started between the Akyem and the Dutch during the first two years after the Nyanoase war. The tension was over the subject of ground-rent (or Kostgeld as the Dutch called it) for fort Crevecoeur.

- 
1. AAT: Asafo & Maase (1925/6); K. Ameyaw, Asamankese Tradition, IAS. Acc. No. KAG/4; Amayaw, Akwatia Tradition, IAS, Acc. KAG/2 (Legon 1963).
  2. De la Planque & Blittersdorp (Accra) to EC, quoted in EC Journal, entry, 30 October 1730, NBKG. 97. Contre de terre was a Portuguese term for a type of beads. Cf. Bosman, Description, p. 117 and Fage's note on p. 527 of Bosman's book (1967 ed.)
  3. Director-General Pranger (EC) to de la Planque (Accra), 1 November 1730, NBKG. 97.



As overlords of the Ga district the Akwamu had held the 'notes' for the European forts on the Ga coast.<sup>1</sup> By right of conquest the Akyem now obtained the notes, and were therefore entitled to collect the ground-rents of the forts in the Ga area. The Akyem rulers appear to have found some difficulty in collecting the rents for the Dutch fort, Crevecoeur. This is suggested by the fact that it was not until 1732 that they managed to get the Dutch to pay, not at the rate of 2 oz. per month, as had been paid to the Akwamu and insisted upon by the Akyem leaders, but at 1 oz.<sup>2</sup> Apparently there had been some misunderstanding between the overlords and the traders.

Competition among the European trading companies sometimes posed difficulties to the Akyem imperial presence on the coast. The European traders occasionally engaged in rivalry to the point of open conflict. This happened between the Danes and the Dutch as from about 1736.<sup>3</sup> In that year the Danes accused the Dutch of trying to instigate Chief Darko of "Dutch" Accra and the Chief of Osu to rise against the Danes.<sup>4</sup> It was the turn of the Dutch to level a similar charge against the Danes in 1737 when they said

---

1. The 'note' was a kind of document which the officials of the various forts gave to African rulers. It entitled such a ruler to collect the ground-rent of the fort or castle for which it was issued.

2. Minutes of Elmina Castle Council Meeting, 15 May 1732, NBKG. 98.

3. Norregaard also discusses the Danish-Dutch Conflicts in the 1730s. Cf. Danish Settlements, pp. 97-99.

4. EN. Boris (CCO) to Copenhagen, 6 July 1736, Vgk 123; breve og dokumenter fra Guinea, 1732-1745.

the Danes were intriguing with Prince Owusu Akyem of Abuakwa against Dutch interest.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental cause of the Danish-Dutch tension was the desire of each of them to get a greater share of the African trade. Their involvement in Ga politics, however, intensified the hostility. The Dutch had supported the candidature of Darko<sup>2</sup> against Okaidja (or Okaidze) another candidate to the 'Dutch' Accra stool. The Dutch also offended Okaidja the more by panyarring (seizing) some of his close relatives and slaves.<sup>3</sup> As a reprisal the dissatisfied Okaidja fled to the Danes at Osu and joined them against the Dutch. As overlords of the Ga district it was the duty of the Abuakwa and Kotoku leaders to settle the differences between the various parties. But instead of mediating, the Akyem became hostile to the Dutch, as a result of the intrigues of the Danes and Okaidja. The dissatisfied Dutch Accra prince and the Danish authorities informed the Abuakwa and the Kotoku that the Dutch were instigating Asante to attack Akyem.<sup>4</sup> Relations with Asante were a delicate affair with the Akyem.<sup>5</sup> In 1734 they had accused the Dutch of being "the friends of Poko Ware", the

---

1. Camper (Accra) to EC, 8 May 1737, NBKG 102.

2. Darko is probably the chief Reindorf refers to as Darko Panyin of the Otu street of Dutch Accra. Cf. History, p. 80.

3. De Bordes' Journal der Voyage au Accra, entry, 22 July 1737, NBKG 190.

4. De Bordes' Journal, entry 21 July 1737, NBKG 190.

5. Akyem-Asante relations during the 1730s are fully discussed on pp. 112-117 below.

Asantehene.<sup>1</sup> To intrigue with one African power against another seems to have been a speciality with the Dutch,<sup>2</sup> but the Akyem leaders found it difficult to decide whether on this occasion there was any truth in the accusation against the Dutch. All the same the Akyem took a serious view of the charge against the Dutch, particularly when the information came from somebody who was in a position to know the Dutch well. That the Akyem at once prepared to attack Fort Crevecouer underscored not only the success of the Okaidja and the Danish intrigue with the Abuakwa and Kotoku rulers but also the sensitivity of the Akyem in the matter of relations with Asante.

Prospect of Akyem invasion of their establishment in the Ga area was something the Dutch viewed with gloom. They decided to prevent its occurrence by resorting to high-powered diplomacy. To this end the Dutch Director-General himself, J. Baron des Bordes, travelled from Elmina Castle to Accra in order to open talks with the Akyem courts. On 4th June 1737, barely a day after his arrival in Accra, des Bordes sent ambassadors

"to the Great Men of the Akim Nation such as Frempung, Baquentyn, and Oers Ōwusu Akyem ..... to enquire from them why they have decided to attack the Dutch Company with whom they have been accustomed to trade always."<sup>3</sup>

The move paid off. On 20th July 1737 des Bordes's ambassadors returned, accompanied by Akyem representatives,

---

1. Augier (Accra) to EC, 28 October 1734, NBKG 101.

2. K.Y. Daaku, "The European Traders and the Coastal states, 1630-1720", in THSG. Vol. VIII (1965) pp. 11-23.

3. Des Bordes' Journal der voyage.

to investigate the charge against the Dutch. During the investigation it was discovered that Okaidja was the source of the accusation, and that there was no truth in the allegation against the Dutch. Consequently Akyem-Dutch relations were seemingly normalised for the moment.<sup>1</sup>

Seemingly because subsequent events show that the normalisation of relations did not necessarily lead to a complete elimination of Akyem involvement in the Danish-Dutch conflict. Prince Owusu Akyem of Abuakwa, non-resident Governor of almost all Ga-Adangbe, was opposed to the decision and preferred to join Okaidja and the Danes against the Dutch. Dutch determination to punish Okaidja for his conduct gave the Akyem Prince the opportunity to pursue this independent line of action. The Dutch sentenced the Ga Prince to a term of imprisonment but on the pleas and intercession of the leading men of Dutch Accra, they commuted it to a fine.<sup>2</sup> Eventually Okaidja effected his escape and went to the Danes and the Osu people, who were only too pleased to welcome and use him as a tool against the Dutch. By late 1737 war was raging between the Danes and Okaidja on the one hand and the Dutch on the other. Okaidja and the Danes apparently managed to get Prince Owusu Akyem to side with them against the Dutch.

The Danish-Okaidja appeal to Prince Owusu Akyem is explained not only by Owusu's governorship of Ga-Adangbe but also by his capabilities and independent turn of mind.

---

1. Des Bordes's *der Voyage*.

2. *Ibid.*, entries, 23-27 July 1737. The fine is not stipulated in the records.

Owusu was a man of action. Romer regretted that he was not the King of Akyem (Abuakwa), and that such a high office had gone to Baa Kwante, a drunkard.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion, however, it is difficult to say whether presents or principle made Owusu Akyem decide to side with the Osu-Okaidja alliance. What is certain is that in late 1737 Owusu raised an army of about 8,000 and sent it in advance to assist the allies.<sup>2</sup> In November the army moved into Akuapem, and then on to Accra in December 1737.<sup>3</sup> By January 1738 Owusu himself had followed his army to the Ga Coast, bringing reinforcement of between 6,000 and 8,000.<sup>4</sup> His presence with a force consisting of about 16,000 soldiers compelled many of the inhabitants of 'Dutch' Accra to flee into Fort Crevecouer for protection.<sup>5</sup>

Then suddenly the situation reversed in favour of the Dutch. Owusu unexpectedly withdrew his army and returned it to its base in Akuapem. From here the army eventually left for Akyem Abuakwa. The Danes explained the withdrawal by saying that there was shortage of water in the Ga district.<sup>6</sup> Scarcity of water could be bad enough for an

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 181; cf. also Reindorf, History, p.80.

2. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 98.

3. Kuijl (Breku) to EC, November; Starckenburg (Accra) to EC 11 December EC Journal, entry 16 December; Resolution of Brummer, Janse & Starckenburg (Accra), 23 December, Starckenburg (Accra) to EC 23 December; des Bordes (EC) to Raams (Shama), 26 December; Raams to de Bordes, 27 December; EC Journal, entry 29 December 1737, NBKG 103 .

4. Starckenburg (Accra) to EC 16 January 1738, NBKG 103.

5. Starckenburg to EC, 29 January & 15 February; EC Journal, entry 22 February; Resolution of officials of Fort Crevecouer, quoted in EC Journal, entry, 6 March; de Bordes (EC) to Accra, 8 March 1738 NBKG 103.

6. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 98.

army on campaign, but this does not appear to provide all the explanation for the withdrawal. Ultimate effectiveness of instructions from Bansa seems to have been the other and perhaps better part of the explanation. In December 1737 the Dutch had noted that "Oers [Owusu] is not assisted with proper force by his brother [Baa Kwante] to begin a formal war here; his advance is entirely contrary to the views of his brother".<sup>1</sup> Starckenburg repeated this opinion in February 1738.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore reasonable to infer from this that representations of the Abuakwahe, and possibly those of Frimpon-Manso of Kotoku, ultimately prevailed upon Owusu to abandon the Ga venture, and join in an impending Akyem invasion of Agona.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever must have obliged Owusu to withdraw his assistance from the Danes and Okaidja, his action considerably eased the tension in the Ga District, though it did not immediately deter Okaidja from engaging in continued hostility to the Dutch.<sup>4</sup> Nor did the Ga Prince pay any heed to later warnings, from the Akyem courts, to desist from unfriendly activities against the Dutch. He defied his Akyem overlords, went ahead to block some of the routes leading to Dutch Accra, and proved very elusive to all Dutch efforts to catch him.<sup>5</sup> Obviously he felt

---

1. Starckenburg (Accra) to EC, 11 December 1737, NBKG 103.

2. Starckenburg (Accra) to EC, 26 February 1738; EC Journal, entry, 5 March 1738, NBKG 103.

3. See pp. 109-111 below.

4. Starckenburg (Accra) to EC, 28 March; EC Journal, entry, 7 April 1738, NBKG 103.

5. Starckenburg to EC, 11 June 1738; Starckenburg (Tema) to EC, 10 July 1738, NBKG 103.

that the Akyem rulers would not be able to send any punitive force against him, as they were pre-occupied with problems in Old Akwamu and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> This point must be emphasized because in the second half of 1738 when Akyem leaders managed to solve some of their difficulties in Old Akwamu, and became less pre-occupied with other matters not much was heard about Okaidja's activities. He must have become frightened when information reached Tema in July 1738 that an Akyem army would soon arrive in the Ga-Adangbe province to deal with him.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, by then the Danes and the Dutch had reached some kind of a peace settlement. Without Danish co-operation and support from Owusu Akyem Okaidja had reached the end of his tether.

Old Akwamu also presented provincial problems. Here the Akyem over-rule was hated. In 1730-1731 when the inhabitants accepted vassalage to the Akyem, it seems that they were only playing for time. Continual recalcitrance on their part became the main feature of relations with their overlords. In 1732 they blockaded the routes to the Ga coast against Akyem trade.<sup>3</sup> From then onwards Old Akwamu dislike for the Akyem domination usually expressed itself in this type of economic sanction.<sup>4</sup> Bansa and Oda found it a nuisance; and the European trading companies regarded it as bad for business naturally, and tried to persuade Old Akwamu

---

1. See below.

2. Starckenburg (Tema) to EC, 10 July 1738, NBKG 103.

3. D-G Pranger (EC) to Amsterdam, 3 April 1732, FCL.

4. Campier (Accra) to EC, 16 & 22 September 1736, NBKG. 101; Starckenburg (Accra) to EC, cited in EC Journal, entry 5 March 1738, NBKG 103.

against it. In 1733 the Dutch for example offered to mediate between the vassals and the overlords,<sup>1</sup> but were not successful largely because the people of Old Akwamu would neither send representatives to Accra to deliberate, nor make known their immediate grievances against the Akyem.<sup>2</sup>

In 1734 the Akyem disclosed intentions to send a punitive expedition against Old Akwamu and invited assistance from other subject peoples such as the Ga and the Akuapem. The Ga were not willing to accept the request but knowing what the consequences of a direct refusal would mean for them, sent presents to the Akyem leaders, apparently with a plea to be excused. The projected punitive expedition, however, did not materialize. It would appear that unexpected developments elsewhere in their empire compelled the Akyem rulers to postpone the day of reckoning with Old Akwamu. In mid-1738, however, Akyem forces descended on the province and confirmed their authority there.<sup>3</sup> The success of the Akyem naturally increased the dislike Old Akwamu had for them. In 1741-2 this province received with great enthusiasm the news of an impending Asante attack on Abuakwa and Kotoku.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Minutes of the Council at Elmina Council, 10 July 1733; EC Journal, entry, 14 July 1733, NBKG 99.

2. Pranger (Accra) to EC, 3 August; EC journal, entry, 6 August 1733, NBKG 99.

3. Starckenburg (Accra) to EC, 7 October 1738, NBKG. 103.

4. Akyem-Asante relations during this period are discussed on pp.112-117 below.



And so did the Voltaic Akwamu, naturally. The basic cause of the grievance of Voltaic Akwamu was continued Akyem hostility against her, even across the Volta. Since they fled to and settled in trans-Volta, in 1730, Akyem war-mongers had scarcely left them in peace in spite of distance and the barrier presented by the Firaw (Volta) river. In 1730 a section of the Akyem forces joined the rebel Akwamu Prince, Amo,<sup>1</sup> to invade parts of the Lower trans-Volta region. An attack on Voltaic Akwamu was not the direct objective of Amo, but the presence of the Akyem in his army must have frightened the trans-Volta Akwamu. In 1731 and again in 1734 the Akyem themselves invaded the region.<sup>2</sup> The attacks were actually slave raids which the Abuakwa prince, Owusu Akyem, organized against Krepi,<sup>3</sup> but they may have scared Voltaic Akwamu. At any rate in 1737 there was a direct Akyem attack on them. The Akyem killed and captured many of the inhabitants; those who could escape death and capture sought safety on an inland in the Volta river.<sup>4</sup> To prevent future Akyem attacks on them the Voltaic Akwamu appealed to the Dutch at Keta to accord them protection or at least intercede with the Akyem.<sup>5</sup> King Agaja of Dahomey invaded the Keta district at about this time.<sup>6</sup> There was a

---

1. Cf. p. 81 above.

2. Waroe & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 25 March 1731, Vgk.122.

3. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 169.

4. 'From' (?Vroom) Keta, to EC, 10 June 1737, NBKG, 103.

5. Vroom's Report from Keta, 10 June 1737, NBKG 103.

6. Akinjogbin, Dahomey, p. 106.

strong speculation among the Dutch that Voltaic Akwamu probably had appealed to the Dahomean King for help against the Akyem.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch began to put their defences in the Ga area on good footing in anticipation of the allegedly impending Dahomean assault on the Akyem.<sup>2</sup> The expected attack however, never took place, but this does not rule out the possibility that Voltaic Akwamu had solicited help from Abomey.<sup>3</sup> For the Akyem ascendancy was a source of worry to the Voltaic Akwamu, just as it was to others like Asante, Fante and Agona.

Immediately after the defeat of Akwamu, Agona and the eastern Fante began to show their dislike for the Akyem hegemony. The 1729-30 war had scarcely ended when there were indications that relations between the Akyem states and the Agona as well as the Fante were not going to be cordial. The basic cause of the strained relations was of course the jealousy of Agona and Fante for the Akyem success against Akwamu; and the immediate cause the duplicity and opportunism of those two peoples. In the second half of 1730 when the war with Akwamu was at its peak, Agona and Fante, until then allies of Akwamu, sent to assure the Akyem leaders of their willingness to join in the final assault on Akwamu. Indeed between them Agona and Fante were believed to have raised an army of 20,000 strong for the purpose.<sup>4</sup> But they did not go

1. D-G des Bordes (Accra) to EC, 21 July 1737, NBKG. 103.

2. Ibid.

3. Abomey was the capital of Dahomey.

4. Blittersdorp (Accra) to EC, 5 September 1730; Gawron (Apam) to EC, EC Journal, entry 17 September 1730, NBKG 97.

to the aid of the Abuakwa-Kotoku forces as promised; instead they remained outside the war zone, and true to their general habit of trying to reap where they had not sown,<sup>1</sup> the Fante and Agona captured any Akwamu who fell into their hands while fleeing.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently after the war with Akwamu, Frimpon Manso of Kotoku and Owusu Akyem of Abuakwa<sup>3</sup> marched into Eastern Fante. Gomoahene Kusi Adu offered to mediate between Akyem and their adversaries.<sup>4</sup> Apparently he was not altogether successful as by 1732 war was still raging between Akyem forces and those of the Agona-Fante alliance.<sup>5</sup> Akyem had assistance from an Assin chief whom the Dutch called "Doddi Thibo".<sup>6</sup> This ruler seems to be no other than

- 
1. Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' European records are full of instances of this. To some of the Europeans cheating was Fante 'national' characteristic.
  2. Blittersdorp (Accra) to EC, 14 December 1730, NBKG. 97.
  3. Baa Kwante, the Abuakwahene himself, left directly for home, perhaps satisfied with the notion that his heir apparent, Owusu, could act better than he.
  4. Blittersdorp (Accra) to EC, 14 December 1730, NBKG 97.
  5. Raems (Senya Breku) to EC, cited in the EC Journal, entry 4 February; Elet (Accra) to EC, noted in the EC Journal, entry 16 February 1732, NBKG 98.
  6. EC Journal, entry 16 February 1732, NBKG 98. It is not altogether clear which of the Assins, Apemanim or Atanoso, had "Thibo" as its ruler. Most probably he was king of Assin Atanoso. The second of his names is surely identifiable as Tsibo or Tibo, a name quite popular with Assin Atanoso Princes. Atanoso tradition recalls that the Fifth Atanosohene was called Oduro Tsibo (Cf. Daaku, K.Y., Oral Traditions of Asin-Twifo, p. 5). "Oduro" might well be the "Doddi" of the Dutch sources.

the Assin Atanosohene, Oduro Tsibo, who, according to tradition, assisted Kotokuhene Frimpon Manso in his war against Akwamu.<sup>1</sup> Before Akyem forces were ready for the war, this Assin ruler had declared his willingness to attack Agona and Fante on their behalf. Agona and Fante seem to have sued for peace, before war could break out. But Agona continued to be a nuisance to the extent that Abuakwa-Kotoku forces, led by Frimpo Manso and the Abuakwa Prince, Owusu Akyem, invaded and defeated it in 1738.<sup>2</sup>

About two years after the attack on Agona Frimpon Manso died. Romer dates the event to 1741 and so does Reindorf.<sup>3</sup> Evidence from contemporary sources suggests

- 
1. Daaku, *Assin-Twifu Tradition*, p. 7. This tradition is essentially confirmed by the tradition of Asafo, in Akyem Abuakwa. The Asafo tradition gives it that during the Nyanoase War, as it calls the 1729-30 war, a Nana Oduro Tibo, described as Denkyerahene, assisted Kotokuhene Frimpon Manso against Akwamu. The Denkyera do not recollect a King of theirs called Oduro Tibo. Perhaps the Asafo tradition refers to Assin Atanosohene and not Denkyera. This is not to imply that Denkyera could not have also gone to the aid of Frimpon Manso. The ruling lineages of Kotoku and Denkyera were, and are still, of the Agona clan. The Akan clan system enjoined all lineages of the same clan to regard themselves as kinsmen who, if possible, should help one another, in times of difficulty. But all in all the circumstantial evidence suggests that it was Assin Atanosohene Oduro Tsibo who assisted the Akyem states against Agona and Fante in 1732.
  2. Kuijl (Accra) to EC, 15 & 20 September 1738; Starckenburg to EC, 20 September and 7 October 1738, NBKG 103.
  3. Romer, *Tilforladlig*, p. 181; Reindorf, *History*, p. 80.

that Frimpon's death may have occurred in 1740. During the first eight months of 1740 Akyem traders did not frequent the coast as they were wont to do; and a planned invasion of Agona was dropped.<sup>1</sup> Probably the Akyem were mourning Frimpon's death. Asante declaration of war in 1740 against the Akyem states substantiates the suggestion here.<sup>2</sup> In the 1720s Asantehene Opoku Ware had promised never to go to war against the Akyem states as long as Frimpon Manso lived. In 1740 he was poised for war against them, and the Akyem made feverish preparations to face him: from the Danes alone they bought 6,000 lbs. of gun-powder, 2,000 pieces of flint, and 6,800 ankers of Flensborger brandy.<sup>3</sup> Frimpon Manso must have died about that time.

The tension with Asante dated back to the very beginning of the Akyem hegemony. In spite of Opoku Ware's promise to Frimpon Manso referred to above, rumours of impending Asante attack on the Akyem states were prevalent in 1730, 1731, 1734 and 1737. Perhaps it was a proof of the strong influence which the personality of Frimpon Manso exercised on Kumasi that war did not break out between Akyem and Asante earlier than 1740. Asante jealousy for the Akyem domination in the south-east was the fundamental cause of the tension. The story is told how while he had great respect for Frimpon Manso of Kotoku, Asantehene Opoku War I

---

1. Groen (Accra) to EC, 8 April; A. L. Smith (Mouree) to EC, 19 October; EC Journal, entries, 26 April and 19 October 1740, NBKG. 104. Cf. also Norregaard, op. cit., p. 101; Fynn, Asante, p. 73.

2. See n. 3 below.

3. E. N. Boris (CCO) to Copenhagen, 25 May 1740 Vgk.

was inclined to look down upon Abuakwahene Baa Kwante as a man of poor qualities, at least when Baa was a prince.<sup>1</sup> He thus did not expect Baa, as Abuakwahene to achieve imperial status and thus be at par with the Asantehene. Other grievances against the Akyem included the Asantehene's feeling that the Akyem had treated the Akwamu ruling lineage unfairly by driving them out of their pre-1730 kingdom: the Asante court secretly cherished the hope of one day restoring the Akwamu to their Nyanoase Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Another was the inclination of the Akyem States to want to sympathise with and support Wassahene Ntsiful, a rebel, against Asante.<sup>3</sup> Probably Dutch intrigues also contributed to the Asante decision to go to war against the Akyem.<sup>4</sup>

The immediate cause was of course Asante bellicosity. Apaw succeeded to the Kotoku stool after Frimpon.<sup>5</sup> Soon the Asantehene sent to tell him and Baa Kwante of Abuakwa that he would descend on them.<sup>6</sup> Probably the object of the message was to frighten the Akyem leaders in order to compel them to voluntarily accept vassalage to Asante. But they rather chose to fight.<sup>7</sup>

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 167.

2. Richard Graves (CCC) to the Royal African Company (RAC), 3 April 1742, T 70/1515.

3. Director-General Pranger (EC) to Blittersdorp (Accra), 13 December 1730, NBKG 97.

4. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 101.

5. Ibid., p. 102; Fynn, Asante, p. 74. Reindorf (History, p. 80), says Ampem (Ampim) was the successor.

6. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 182.

7. Ibid.

Throughout 1741 the Akyem continued with the war preparations they had started in 1740, buying all war stores they could get from the European merchants in the Ga district.<sup>1</sup> Full battle was, however, joined in or about early 1742 when the Asante army carried the war to the Akyem. A prominent authority on Ghana history gives the impression that the war was between only Akyem Abuakwa and Asante.<sup>2</sup> The evidence so far adduced here leaves room for no doubt that the war was between the two Akyem states of Abuakwa and Kotoku on the one hand and Asante on the other. The Asante army was about twenty thousand strong and was under the command of "Ursue Afrie" (Owusu Afriyie).<sup>3</sup> The Akyem met them with a much larger number: Abuakwa and Kotoku each provided an army of ten thousand strong; besides, contingents from Ada, Akuapem and Dutch Accra assisted them.<sup>4</sup> The Akyem forces went to the war with the confidence that they would win.<sup>5</sup>

A series of battles took place. Opinions vary as

- 
1. Juijl (Accra) to EC, 13 and 26 September, 4 and 5 December 1741, NBKG 105.
  2. Wilks, in Ajayi and Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol. One, p. 377.
  3. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 185.
  4. Ibid., pp. 182-3. The Dutch Accra, led by their Chief Daako, sided with Akyem against Dutch advice, Cf. Kujl (Accra) to EC, 5 December 1741, NBKG 105. Daako lost his life. -Cf. Janson (Apam) to Juijl (Accra), n.d.
  5. Juijl (Accra) & EC, 4 and 5 December 1741, NBKG. 105.

to how many there were. One says three;<sup>1</sup> and another gives two.<sup>2</sup> One thing common to these views is that they suggest that the war was keenly contested. By March 1742, however, the Akyem had suffered a terrible defeat.<sup>3</sup> Their losses must have been heavy: Apaw lost his life; Owusu Akyem, the Abuakwa warrior prince, also fell in the war; Baa Kwante as well as many members of the Akyem aristocracy, seeing that the war was lost, committed suicide; and a little under ten thousand of their number were captured, among them the Kotoku Prince Broni, and Asare, an Abuakwa Prince.<sup>4</sup>

Those of the Akyem who survived death or capture attributed their defeat to the defectiveness of the Danish manufactured guns they used in the war. The fault with the guns may have indeed partly led to their downfall, for the Danes, on receiving the Akyem complaint, examined their guns and actually found them to be faulty.<sup>5</sup> Asante military strength, of course was the other major factor.

In spite of the defeat the Akyem would not submit. They held on for two years, by resorting to guerrilla warfare. It was the Asante themselves who initiated moves

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, pp. 183-4.

2. Reindorf, History, p.81.

3. Kuijl to EC, 18 March; Minutes of EC Council Meeting, 22 March; Raams & Verscheuren, Journal of a Voyage to Accra, 25 March and 4 April 1742, NBKG.106. Governor and Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 19 March 1742, Vgk 123; Richard Graves (CCC) to RAC, 3 April 1742, T70/1515. Cf. also Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 102.

4. Romer, Tilforladlig, pp. 183-5.

5. Ibid. p.213.



towards a peace settlement. Opoku Ware is reported to have sent to inform the Akyem of his intentions to live peaceably with them provided

- (i) They would enstool the captive Akyem princes, Broni and Asare, as Kotokuhene and Abuakwahene respectively;
- (ii) they would ensure safety to Asante traders and travellers passing through Akyem territory to and from the Ga coast;
- (iii) they would surrender the 'notes' for the forts and castles in the Ga district;
- (iv) they would send representatives to Kumasi to treat formally with him.<sup>1</sup>

Abuakwa and Kotoku reacted differently to the offer. Kotoku accepted it. During the two years after 1742 they were a vagabond nation. They seem to have enstooled Ampem as their King. But on accepting the peace terms from Asante they deposed Ampem and put Broni in his place.<sup>2</sup> Abuakwa, on the other hand rejected the peace offer and determined to resist Asante.<sup>3</sup>

But whether they chose to be stubborn or submit, the defeat in 1742 brought the Akyem domination in the south-east to an end. All their former subject states welcomed Asante as the new overlord. Nor were the European trading companies slow in deciding to pay the ground-rents of their forts to the Asantehene.

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, pp. 188-9.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 80.

3. The Abuakwa resistance is discussed in Chapter 4 below.

After defeating Akwamu in 1730 and the Agona in 1738, Abuakwa and Kotoku stood on a proud pinnacle of imperial power and prestige. Success also conferred on them economic prosperity. But this very achievement created its own problems. They had the ability to and did solve many of them. But when they were called upon in 1742 to solve the perennial problem of tension with Asante they were found wanting. By their failure they lost an empire that was barely ten years old.

## CHAPTER 4

### ABUAKWA, KOTOKU AND ASANTE, 1742-1784

The 1742 debacle presented Abuakwa and Kotoku with two alternatives: they had to choose between quick submission, with consequential acceptance of vassalage, to Asante, and continued resistance in spite of defeat. There is the view, first expressed in the early 1820s and repeated more recently, that by 1750 all Akyem had submitted to Asante imperial domination.<sup>1</sup> This view is only true in relation to Kotoku which submitted to Asante soon after the 1742 war. But Abuakwa, under Pobi (1742-1764) and Obirikoran (1764-1784) could not so easily reconcile itself to the status of a willing vassal, and resisted Asante<sup>2</sup> domination till 1783 when it finally submitted.

The contrast between the two decisions derived mainly from the different geographical positions and attitudes of the two states in relation to Asante. Proximity to Asante militated against the desire and ability of Kotoku to resist Kumasi with effect. According to Romer, Asante itself offered peace terms to the Akyem states about two years after the 1742 war.<sup>3</sup> Kotoku accepted the terms. It must have been after the acceptance that Asante political thinkers and war strategists recommended the unprecedented measure of

---

1. Dupuis, A Residence, p. 234; Boahen, Topics, p. 74, and in Ajayi & Espie, A Thousand Years, p. 164.

2. Wilks, I., Asante in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge University Press (CUP), 1975, p. 24.

3. Romer, Tilforladlig, pp. 188-9.

forcing the Kotoku to remove their capital, Oda, on the east bank of the Pra, to Dampon, on the west bank.<sup>1</sup> The transplantation deprived the Kotoku of the Pra as a barrier to, and a bastion of defence against, Asante.<sup>2</sup> Besides, the measure pulled the Kotoku ruling house nearer to metropolitan Asante, and thereby increased prospects of closer and constant Kumasi surveillance on political climate in Kotoku. The slightest indication of recalcitrance and restiveness could easily and quickly bring a punitive armed expedition against Kotoku, as happened in 1781.<sup>3</sup> There is an indication that Kotoku experienced a more subtle form of the transplantation measure. Asantehene Opoku Ware I is reported to have given the name "Asante-Akyem" to northern Akyem.<sup>4</sup> This would suggest an Asante policy aimed at making the Kotoku forget themselves as Akyem. These measures so weakened the Kotoku that between 1744 and 1783 when Abuakwa ultimately yielded to Asante, they had staged only one revolt against Asante: this was in or about 1781, but it was not successful.<sup>5</sup>

Proximity and over all inclination towards loyalty to Asante so worked against Kotoku, that it is to be wondered at that Asante leaders ultimately failed to bring about full

---

1. Reindorf History pp. 82 & 89.

2. In 1717 they made a good use of the river to defeat an invading Asante army. cf. Chapter 2 p. 69 above.

3. Dupuis, A Residence, p. 244.

4. "Precis of Akim claims: Confidential Report, No. 345/00, dd. 7th January 1903, File No. D.46, Kumasi Archives.

5. Bowdich, Mission, p. 237; Dupuis, A Residence, p. 244; Reindorf, History, pp. 133-4; "Precis of Akim claims", MP. 5505/99.

integration with Kotoku. The Asante failure is all the more striking since other factors favoured such a course. In language, culture, manners, ethnic affinity, and above all social as well as political systems, the Kotoku were every bit akin to the Asante. This view is equally applicable to Akuakwa and non-Akyem states like Kwawu, Denkyera, Assin (Apemanim and Atandoso), Twifo and Wassa. Inability to conceive integration between the various Akan groups as an ultimate and desirable goal seems to explain the Asante failure. Excellent at conquering, eighteenth century Asante could not devise tight provincial administration, which alone could have ensured the continuous subservience of vassal states and thereby pave the way for ultimate integration with such subject states which, by every standard, were kindred to them.<sup>1</sup> This omission, coupled with Asante tendency to be harsh in exacting vassal obligations, often created in subject states a disposition to rebellion. This was particularly the case with these of them who were fairly removed from metropolitan Asante and at the same time were fortunate to have leaders with indomitable spirit.

Abuakwa had these two advantages. Situated to the south of Kotoku, Abuakwa was, by that fact, further removed from Asante than was Kotoku. In fact Abuakwa could sometimes use Kotoku as a buffer against Asante.<sup>2</sup> But its greater fortune lay in the enstoolment of forceful rulers after 1742. Pobi, sometimes called Pobi Asomani, succeeded to the stool after the death of Baa Kwante who was killed in the 1742 war

---

1. For useful discussions on the subject of Asante provincial administration, see I. Wilks, "Ashanti Government", in D. Forde & P.M. Kaberry (ed) West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century (OUP) 1967) pp. 206-238; GP Hagan, "Ashanti Bureaucracy", in THSG Vol. XII (1971) pp. 43.62.

2. See Chapter 2, p. 65 above.

with Asante. Right from the beginning of his reign Pobi showed the same fighting spirit as Prince Owusu Akyem had possessed. He was determined to resist Asante. Guerrilla warfare and alliances were the two major methods he used in opposing Asante militarism. He and his subjects were probably that section of the Akyem who were reported to have fled "eastwards" immediately after the 1742 war.<sup>1</sup> To flee his kingdom after the March 1742 defeat would give him a breathing space to reorganize his forces. He gave battle to the Asante occupation army in April 1742, and once again Abuakwa suffered a defeat.<sup>2</sup> It was after this second defeat of Abuakwa that the invaders were able to gain a passage through to Accra to announce their victory formally on the coast. Even then the general opinion on the coast was that there would be further fighting between the two peoples.<sup>3</sup> Asante inability to gain access through Akyem to the Ga coast until about mid-1743<sup>4</sup> suggests continued Abuakwa resistance. But problems which Asante faced elsewhere seem to have indirectly assisted the Abuakwa resistance. For example, Sahwi, to the north-west of Asante, invaded and

- 
1. Kuijl (Accra) to Director-General de Petersen (EC) 18 March 1742, NBKG 106.
  2. Richard Graves (Accra) to CCC, 3 April 1742 (T70/1515); cf. also S. Tenkorang, "The importance of firearms in the struggle between Ashanti and the coastal states", in the THSG Vol. IX (1968) p. 5 notes 22 and 23.
  3. Director-General de Petersen (EC) to the Assembly of Ten (Amsterdam) 9 July 1742 WIV 488).
  4. Jorgesen to Dorph, 25 May; Dorph (CCO) to Copenhagen, 11 July 1743 Vgk 123: breve og documenter fra Guinea: 1732-1745.

sacked Kumasi while the Asante army was still campaigning in Akyem and Asantehene Opoku Ware I had to double-march part of his army back home in order to deal with the Sahwi.<sup>1</sup> Dagomba to the north-east, was restive, and eventually revolted in 1744.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it was these other problems which compelled Asante to offer to the Akyem states the peace terms already referred to. This move was all the more necessary for Asante to make because the conflict with Akyem Abuakwa led to strained Asante-Fante relations. Greediness had inspired the Fante to help themselves to booty from defeated Akyem, even though they were not allies of Asante in the 1742 war.<sup>3</sup> Another cause was probably the execution, by the Fante, of an Asante chief.<sup>4</sup> After dealing with the Sahwi, Opoku Ware in 1743 decided to curtail his war with Akyem in order to prepare for an armed expedition against Dagomba and for this venture, which took place in 1744,<sup>5</sup> he "had all the powder bought up in both Accra and Elmina."<sup>6</sup>

The diversion of Asante's attention to other directions gave the Abuakwa time to re-organize themselves. Between 1742 and 1746 they were a homeless people crouching

---

1. Reindorf, History, pp. 81-2.

2. Billson's letters, 30 March & 21 July 1744 (Vgk 123).

3. Janson (Apam) to Kuijl (Accra) 30 March 1742, enclosed in Raems & Verseheuren (Accra) to de Petersen (EC) to April 1742 (NBKG 106).

4. D-G de Petersen's Report, 9 July 1742 (WIC 488).

5. Cf Wilks, in Ajayi & Crowder, Vol. One, p. 377 for a discussion of the Asante campaign in Dagomba.

6. De Petersen (EC) to the Assembly of Ten (Amsterdam) 31 October 1744 (WIC 488).

on "the hill country".<sup>1</sup> "The hill country" was perhaps a reference to the Begoro section of the Kintampo-Kwawu-Kofori-dua hill range. Such a terrain would be difficult for an enemy force to storm. The Abuakwa were a defeated, but not a destroyed,<sup>2</sup> nation.

Failure of Asante to restore Voltaic Akwamu to their pre-1730 inheritance is the best measure of the success of the Abuakwa resistance against Asante. The restoration had been one of the aims of Asantehene Opoku Ware I in declaring war on the Akyem in 1742.<sup>3</sup> But Asante was never able to achieve this goal, owing to the effectiveness of Abuakwa resistance. In 1747 Pobi ruthlessly suppressed a revolt in "Old Akwamu".<sup>4</sup> Next he carried the war to Voltaic or New Akwamu, the inhabitants of which he forced to seek refuge on an island in the Volta.<sup>5</sup> Thus far from Asante resuscitating pre-1730 Akwamu, Akyem Abuakwa, in reply to Asante attacks, was wreaking vengeance on what was left of Akwamu power on either side of the Volta.

Pobi did more than that. Four years crouching on the Begoro hills obliged him to espouse an "eastern" policy, aimed at conquering that area. This was the home of the

---

1. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 21 July 1746 Vgk 883; Sekeretprotokoller fort de Christiansborg i Guinea, 1746-1754.

2. Fynn Ph. D. Thesis, p. 167. In his published work, however, Fynn simply says Asante annexed part of Akyem, cf. Asante p. 75.

3. Cf. Chapter 3 p. 113 above.

4. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 18 January 1747, Vgk 883.

5. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen 6 February 1747, Vgk 883.



Gyakiti, a Guan-Kyerepon community. The descendants of these people now inhabit the west bank of the Volta opposite Akwamufie. They recall that their original home was Toprefu, as they called the Begoro-Bososo district. They attribute their emigration from this district to pressures from Akyem Abuakwa who had been defeated by Asante and driven to the Osino neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> The evidence from the Gyakiti tradition finds confirmation from Begoro (Abuakwa) tradition, which names Topremanso, Ketekraa, Besease, Boso, Bosomfi, Akwaawa, Meri, Twewa and Supruso as being among the Guan communities the Fanteakwa (Abuakwa-Begoro) Stool drove away from the Begoro-Bososo District.<sup>2</sup> The two traditions do not recall exactly when the Abuakwa subjugated the Gyakiti (or Toprefu) country, but the event may be dated to the late 1740s. Theirs may have been the hill country referred to by the Danes in 1746 as the place where a section of the Akyem took shelter after their defeat by Asante in 1742.<sup>3</sup> Toprefu, until then, was under Akwamu overlordship. Thus instead of the 1742 Akyem-Asante war weakening the authority and narrowing the base of the Akyem, it increased both.

A tripartite alliance with Akuapem and Krobo was yet another aspect of the "eastern" policy. This alliance

---

1. Gyakiti Tradition, as related by Kwabena Ayisi, "Chief Spokesman of Gyakiti, recorded in Gold Coast Gazette Extraordinary No. 6 (1956) p. 91. The Gazette contains the Report of a Commission appointed to enquire into land dispute involving Abuakwa, Akwamu and Manya Krobo.

2. AAT: Begoro (1925/6).

3. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 21 July 1746, Vgk 883.

instituted an economic sanction against Asante. Its main objective was to prevent Asante from getting to the coast trade in the Ga-Adangme area in order to procure firearms and ammunition from the European forts and castles there. The blockade was quite successful, to the discomfiture of the pro-Asante Dutch. In May 1746 the Dutch on the coast complained to their employers in Holland that they had dilligently tried, but in vain, to get the closed trade routes opened so as to enable them to send presents from Holland to the Asantehene.<sup>1</sup> The continued application of the blockade up to 1749 obliged Asante traders and travellers, desirous to get to the Ga-Adangme coast, first to direct their course to Kwawu, descend the hills to the Afram plains, and cross the Volta into Akwamu, before working their way, with the help of Akwamu escort, to the Adangme and Ga coast towns.<sup>2</sup> In fact Opoku Ware died in 1750 without being able to subdue the Akyem Abuakwa.

In the 1750s the alliance became the eastern counter-part of one in the western sector of southern Gold Coast, though not as a result of a planned policy of the southern states. The alliance in the West embraced the Fante confederate states, Denkyira, and Wassa. All three had axes to grind against Asante.

The tension between Fante and Asante had already

- 
1. D-G de Petersen (EC) to Amsterdam, 20 May & 15 November 1746 (Furley collection, Legon); cf. also Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 21 July 1746, Vgk. 883.
  2. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 23 May 1748 & 26 November 1749, Vgk. 124: breve og. documenter fra Guinea, 1746-1750; Brummer (Accra) to EC, 10 November 1749, NBKG 110.

been mentioned.<sup>1</sup> With regard to Denkyera, since 1701 there had been no real peace between her and Asante. And hostility had always been the main feature of Wassa-Asante relations since 1721 when Asante invaded that state and forced the Wassa ruling house to abandon their country.<sup>2</sup> In 1730-1 this dynasty vainly sought refuge in Akyem (Kotoku).<sup>3</sup> From then on the Wassa became a vagabond nation till the 1740s when the Fante allowed them to settle in the interior of Fanteland.<sup>4</sup> The rationale behind the Fante hospitality to the Wassa was Fante plan to organize concerted action with Wassa against Asante, the common enemy. Like the eastern alliance, the western pact was defensive; its main objective was to prevent Asante from acquiring war stores from the European traders on the coast.<sup>5</sup>

In this respect the eastern alliance, headed by Abuakwa, was singularly successful, as indicated by Dutch inability to get through to Asante.<sup>6</sup> Another yardstick was the inability of Asante traders to get to the Ga coast,

---

1. See p. 122 above.

2. T. Melvil (CCC) to the Committee, 9 & 26 August 1751, T.70/29.

3. Pranger to Blittersdorp (Accra), 13 December 1730 NBKG 97; Pranger to the Assembly of Ten (Amsterdam), 1 March 1731 (Furley Collection).

4. Thomas Melvil (CCC) to the Committee of Merchants Trading to Africa (The Committee), London, 9 August 1751 (T70/29).

5. Tenkorang, "Firearms", in THSG Vol. IX p. 5.

6. See p. 125 above.

because of "the Akim and Krobo [and Akuapem] who stay in large numbers between Aquamboe and the beach".<sup>1</sup> There was constant anxiety among the Ga and the Dutch as to when "Akim Caboceer Pobbie" would open the trade routes for "The Asiantee and the Quamboe people".<sup>2</sup> The western alliance was equally successful. Opoku Ware I tried to smash it in 1748 but failed. As late as 1757 the English as well as the Danes and the Dutch were lamenting the long absence of the Asante (whom they described as great traders) from the western sector of the coast for the past seven years, on account of a quarrel with Wassahene Ntsiful.<sup>3</sup> Indicative of the success of the alliance in the eastern sector was Dutch attempt in 1750 to destroy it by trying to detach Akuapem and Krobo from Akyem Abuakwa.<sup>4</sup> Pobi got wind of the move and sent 5,000 soldiers to Ladoku to strengthen the blockade against Asante and Akwamu.<sup>5</sup>

Basically Pobi's eastern policy was political but it was also in response to the dynamics of trade on the Ga-Adangme coast. The Akyem drive to the coast had affected the slave trade on this section of the coast. Until its

- 
1. Brummer (Accra) to van Hoorst (EC) 10 April; same to same 11 & 29 May 1750 (NBKG 111)..
  2. Brummer to EC. 17 March 1750 (NBKG 111); cf also Letters from CCO to Copenhagen, 23 May and 10 August 1750 (Vgk 124) and 17 September 1750 (Vgk 883).
  3. Thomas Melvil (CCC) to the Committee, 9 & 26 August 1751, T70/29.
  4. Brummer (Accra) to EC, II, 18 & 29 May; Brummer (Ponny) to EC, 3 December 1750, NBKG 111.
  5. Ibid.

defeat in 1730 by the Akyem, Akwamu had been the pillar of the slave trade here. After its defeat and following the subsequent migration of the ruling dynasty to the trans-Volta, the trade in Accra decreased in volume, as indicated by constant European complaints already referred to. Its centre of gravity would seem to have shifted east-wards, in response to the Akwamu migration, to the Ladoku coast. However, the Akwamu emigration does not provide a full explanation to the shift. Availability of slaves in Krepi partly explains the change. By mid-eighteenth century this trans-Volta district was supplying a sizeable proportion of the slaves in the Gold Coast trade. Hence the practice in the 1730s of the Abuakwa rulers raiding the district for slaves.<sup>1</sup> The building of Fort Fredensborg at Ningo by the Danes during this period, and the general rivalry among the European trading companies to establish themselves east of Ga,<sup>2</sup> were other responses to the shift, and no doubt indicators to the lucrativity of trade east of Accra. Pobi's occupation of Ladoku with a 5,000 strong army in 1750 was obviously aimed at blocking the loophole the shift created in favour of Akwamu and Asante.

The effectiveness of the economic blockade which the southern states organized against Asante should have encouraged them to take the offensive against that power. At least during the 1750-1 period such a move stood a good chance of being successful. Asante was then in considerable

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 169.

2. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, pp. 108-109.

disarray. A succession dispute following the death of Opoku Ware in the first third of 1750 had divided the Kumasi state into two factions.<sup>1</sup> And the dispute did not end until late 1751 when Kusi was selected as the new Asantehene.<sup>2</sup> As long as the succession dispute remained, psychologically Asante was ill-prepared for foreign aggression. But there was no indication that Abuakwa or any of the southern states ever thought of carrying the war to Asante. In fact throughout the second half of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth none of the Akyem states or the other southern states ever thought of, much less executed, aggression against Asante.

This deficiency in the Akyem and other southern states created in Asante a superiority complex. Kusi Obodum underlined the Asante confidence in November 1751 when he announced intentions to invade Akyem Abuakwa within four months from that time.<sup>3</sup> He was not indulging in empty boast. He did attack and defeat Akyem (Abuakwa).<sup>4</sup> But once again Asante failed to subjugate the country. Pobi continued to be in arms throughout the rest of the 1750s and even after. The cause of Abuakwa was well served by the rebellion of Wassa against Asante. The rebellion attracted much of the attention of the Asante Court. In or about 1753 Kumasi put

- 
1. Brummer (Accra) to EC, 3, 11, 18 & 29 May 1750 (NBKG 111). One faction supported Daako and the other Kusi Obodum.
  2. Director-General & Council (EC) to Assembly of Ten (Amsterdam) 17 November 1751 (WIC ?490).
  3. Director-General & Council (EC) to Amsterdam, 17 November 1751, WIC 490.
  4. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, 109-110.

an army of about 90,000 strong in the field against Wassa.<sup>1</sup> One of the factors encouraging Asante to undertake the Wassa venture was the steady disintegration of the western alliance. The Fante, for example, were steadily growing weary of it. For the existence of the blockade of the trade routes by the alliance reduced the volume of trade from the interior to the coast. To the Fante the decrease meant a great loss in their middlemen's profits. Thus in a way the sanctions they themselves had helped to institute against Asante were backfiring on the Fante. Consequently in 1750-1 they secretly worked to destroy the ban by clandestinely inciting Asante to attack Wassa.<sup>2</sup> But Asante could not immediately take advantage of the Fante betrayal of Wassa, owing to the death of Opoku Ware I about that time. It was left to Opoku's successor, Kusi Obodum, to attack and defeat Wassa in 1752.

The Asante victory over Wassa seems to have frightened Akyem Abuakwa. In or about early 1753, Abuakwa joined Wassa and other southern states in a move to find a peace settlement with Asante.<sup>3</sup> In December 1753, Thomas Melvil, the governor at Cape Coast Castle, reported of the intention of Akyem Abuakwa, Wassa and others including the Fante, to send ambassadors to negotiate peace with the

---

1. Bascot (Axim) to EC, 16 January 1752, NBKG 113.

2. J. Roberts to Halifax, 28 September 1750, cited by Tenkorang, "Firearms" in THSG, Vol. IX, p. 6 n. 26; Roberts to Hillhouse, 23 November 1750, T70/1476; Fiscal von Dadelbeek (EC) to Amsterdam, 16 September 1757 WIC 490.

3. Governor & Council (CCC) to Copenhagen, 3 May 1753 VGK 124; Thomas Melvil to the Committee, 3 November 1753 T70/30.

Asantehene and that he had been asked to appoint a representative to join the ambassadors to Kumasi.<sup>1</sup>

The rationale behind the request to the Governor was probably that the presence of his representative in the peace mission would lend weight to the move and convince Asante of the sincerity of the peace seekers.

Besides the Fante effort, Abuakwa initiative contributed to the launching of the peace move. A member of the Abuakwa ruling house was given great credit in this respect. In August 1754 the English recorded that

"a near relation of Ous, formerly King of Akim [i.e. Owusu Akyem who was a Prince and not King] went to Ashantee without communicating his design to any one. When he came before Quishee [Kusi], he told who he was, on which orders were given to chop off his head. But he very coolly told the King that if he had a passion for his head, he was welcome to it, only he wished he [King] would first give him time to tell what carried him there; this was granted. I observe, said he, that for many years you on one side, Akim, Dinkera, and Warsaw on the other, have kept each other at bay, neither party choosing to fight, and yet you do not make peace. It is for this reason that I am come to know your terms, if I can be the means of reconciling all your differences, I shall esteem it the greatest action of my life; if I fail, you may dispose of my head as you please. Quishee and all present applauded the resolution and good intentions of the man. A treaty was immediately set on foot and concluded on their terms. The Ashantees are to recover 1600 oz of gold, viz from Warsaw 800 oz, from Akim [Abuakwa] 400 oz, and from Dinkira 400 oz. Of this money the Warsaws have paid 400 oz to the King's messengers

---

1. Melvil to Committee, 26 December 1753, cf. also same to same, 4 April 1754, T70/30; "A narrative of Transactions with the Fantees on the death of Intuffero (Ntsiful), King of Warsaw" (Wassa), 1752, T70/30 pp. 11f.



now in their camp. The other moiety is to be paid when Say Osei, heir to the Stool or Throne ..... of Ashantee takes fetish to observe what has been concluded".<sup>1</sup>

The reaction of the European traders to the peace agreement seems to have been one of relief. The Dutch for instance were happy at the prospect of the peace settlement. They noted how the Akyem had agreed in principle to serve Asante; and hoped that eventual peace settlement would be reached very soon to make it possible for trade to recover.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to the Dutch expectation, however, the peace price to be paid by Abuakwa became a subject of misunderstanding between them and the Asante government, and nearly led to a breakdown of the negotiations. The details are not known but the differences must have been great enough, because the Akyem delegates to the talks were detained at one stage and rumours circulated in May 1755 that Asante might take the field against Abuakwa at any moment.<sup>3</sup> Abuakwa attempt to change its mind seems to have caused the hitch. The change

- 
1. Thomas Melvil (CCC) to Committee, 7 August 1754 (T70/30). The money to be paid by the three peoples to Ashantee was probably a form of compensation rather than tribute. Among the Akan (and other Ghanaian peoples) in a quarrel or dispute the party found guilty was expected to pay money called mpata i.e. compensation, to appease the offended party. By virtue of earlier victories, Asante was the overlord of these three states. The latter's continued resistance against Asante amounted to rebellion and therefore an offence against Asante.
  2. Pieter Woortman to EC, noted in EC Journal, entry ? July 1754, NBKG 115.
  3. Woortman (Apam) to EC, 13 May 1755; NBKG 116, de Graft (Accra) to EC, 14 June 1755, NBKG 116; Day-Journal (CC0), entries, 5 June 1754 & 5 March 1755, Vgk; Sekretprotokoller, 1755-1762.

of attitude was perhaps a contagion from Wassa. The Wassahene, Enimil I,<sup>1</sup> acting under the influence of his War Chief, Asare, refused to ratify the peace pact,<sup>2</sup> and may well have tried to persuade the Abuakwahene to follow his example. Consequently it was not until 1757 that Akyem Abuakwa finally reached a truce with Asante;<sup>3</sup> while Wassa was still opposed to it.<sup>4</sup> As a result of the truce, in October 1757 Akyem (Abuakwa) and Asante traders turned up in strength to trade on the Ga-Adangbe coast.<sup>5</sup>

This encouraging development was, however, short-lived. Within three years the truce had broken down, and parties were back to their pre-1757 positions. Lack of interest in true peace settlement on the part of Abuakwa and bad influence from Wassa appear to have been the causes of the breakdown. Pobi's aim in reaching the 1757 truce was obviously to gain a breathing space. Bad influence from Wassa is suggested by the ultimate alignment between Abuakwa and that state.<sup>6</sup> Between 1758 and 1759 the Fante

---

1. Ntsiful died in 1752.

2. Tenkorang, "Firearms", in THSG Vol. IX p. 7.

3. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 15 August 1757 (Diverse Arkivalier fra-Guine), I am grateful to Mr. Ole Justesen of University of Copenhagen (1969) who drew my attention to this source.

4. Tenkorang, 'Firearms', in THSG. Vol. IX p. 7.

5. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 22 October 1757, Diverse Arkwalier.

6. Cf. p. 135 below.

tried in vain to wean Wassa from its uncompromising attitude towards Asante. But Wassa remained adamant. So irritating did Fante find the attitude that they threatened to sack the Wassa from the Fante country.<sup>1</sup>

Worse for Wassa the Fante Confederation resolved at Abura to, and did, inform Kumasi of their anger against Wassa for its intransigence.<sup>2</sup> This action led to a strengthening of the rapprochement between Asante and Fante.<sup>3</sup>

Asante flirtation with Old Akwamu may have also contributed to the breakdown of the 1757 truce. For in July 1760 Pobi ordered an attack on Old Akwamu; the object of the attack was two fold: it was a punitive measure against the restive province, and a calculated move to round up all Asante citizens found there.<sup>4</sup> The expedition was successful. Thus to Old Akwamu the 1742 Asante invasion of the Akyem states eventually brought neither freedom nor peace and prosperity as Asantehene Opoku Ware had hoped it would.<sup>5</sup> Abuakwa presence there had come to stay. Neither recalcitrance and rebellion of the Akwamu nor Asante efforts, could save Old Akwamu from ultimate incorporation into the Abuakwa state complex that was evolving.<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. Nassau Senior (CCC) to the Committee, 15 June & 5 July 1758, T70/30.
  2. Senior to the Committee, 3 January, 5 & 22 May and 3 June 1759, T70/30.
  3. Senior to the Committee, 25 September 1759; Mutter to the Committee, 15 October 1760, T70/30.
  4. Blyenburg (Accra) to EC, 17 July 1760, (NBKG 121).
  5. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, p. 133.
  6. The incorporation is fully discussed in Chapter 5, pp. 158-9 below.

With Old Akwamu subdued, Pobi felt free enough to organize an alliance with Denkyera, Twifo and Wassa against Asante.<sup>1</sup> This was probably the time, as Dupuis suggests, when the Yoruba State of Oyo, in Dahomey, encouraged Akyem, Kwawu and others against Asante, on the promise of Oyo military assistance,<sup>2</sup> though the assistance never came. The alliance was more of defensive than offensive in nature. Like preceding southern alliances its main aim was to institute an economic sanction against Asante by tightening up the blockade of the trade routes to the coast against that power. The alliance was also in reply to what its members considered to be Fante perfidy in siding with Asante.

The blockade of the trade routes was a great success, to the utter annoyance of the Dutch. As a reprisal against the members of the alliance the Dutch in 1760 took the decision not to sell firearms and ammunition to the Akyem Abuakwa in particular and Denkyera and Wassa generally.<sup>3</sup> Asante was of course furious and looked for ways and means to hit back at members of the alliance, especially Akyem Abuakwa.<sup>4</sup>

The times were opportune for the southern states to consider organizing an attack on Asante. Leadership

1. Blyenburg (Accra) to EC, 9 September 1760 (NBKG 121); David Pieter Erasmi (EC) to Amsterdam, 22 March 1761 WIC 115.

2. Dupuis, A Residence, pp. 237-8. Claridge, Vol. I pp. 210-211.

3. Blyenburg to EC. 17 July 1760; EC Journal, entries, 26 & 28 November 1760, NBKG 121.

4. Erasmi (EC) to Senya Breku, 28 November 1760. NBKG 121.

there was then relatively weak. There is certainly substance in the view that Asantehene Kusi Obodum was a mediocrity in statecraft.<sup>1</sup> Between 1759 and 1760 rumours kept circulating that he would soon descend on his southern enemies.<sup>2</sup> He even warned the English at Cape Coast Castle that he would take a serious view of it if the English continued to give arms and ammunition to the Wassa for example, as they had allegedly been doing, because he was about to attack the Wassa.<sup>3</sup> But the English treated the warning with contempt, saying Asante under Kusi could never take the field against Wassa or any of the other southern states.<sup>4</sup> Developments in Akyem however, forced Asante to take up arms once more in 1764. As already noted an Akyem-Oyo friendship seems to have been developing. Asante tried to prevent this development before it got out of hand. In 1764 Akyem was invaded by an Asante army under the command of the Juabenhene. The details of the war are not certain. But it appears that the Akyem suffered a defeat.<sup>5</sup> One report said "the residue of Akim" tried, or at least planned, to migrate to trans-Volta in order to put themselves under the protection

- 
1. Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty, p. 31. Others hold contrary views, saying that the times were very difficult for Asante under Kusi. Cf. Fynn, Asante, p. 86.
  2. Senior (CCC) to the Committee, 29 September 1759 (T70/1964); same to same, 3 February & 20 May 1760; Mutter (CCC) to Committee, 15 October 1760 (T70/30).
  3. Mutter's 15 October 1760 Report.
  4. Senior to the Committee, 27 November 1760 (T70/30).
  5. The palatine state of Juaben was a leading member of the Asante confederation. Its Chief regarded himself as next to the Asantehene. Asante success against Akyem Abuakwa may have partly encouraged them to undertake the trans-Volta venture which eventually led to their defeat by Oyo in 1764. Cf. Fynn, Asante, p. 96

of "Ashampoe, King of Popo".<sup>1</sup> "The residue of Akim" must of necessity refer to Abuakwa since Kotoku had already accepted "dominion of Ashantee," as the report says. But Akuakwa was not yet subdued. Asante traders could scarcely visit the coast between the Tano in the west and the Volta in the east largely because of Abuakwa hostility. European opinion on the coast was that Asante would never have easy access to the forts and castles unless she succeeded first in smashing the alliance between Akyem (Abuakwa), Denkyera, Twifo and Wassa.<sup>2</sup>

The over-all success of the economic blockade the allies organized against Asante should have given them inspiration to defend themselves militarily, if they were too cautious to take the offensive against Asante. But by 1764 there were signs that the Southern Alliance would soon collapse; strains and stresses had set in. Abuakwa contributed to this development. Abuakwa-Wassa relations had become strained owing to what the Wassahene regarded as Pobi's interference in Wassa internal affairs. An unsuccessful palace coup led by Asare, the Wassa war chief, against Wassahene Enimil I in 1763 had brought about a civil conflict in Wassa.<sup>3</sup> In or about early 1764 Asare fled his country and sought protection with Pobi of Abuakwa.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Gilbert Petrie (CCC) to the Committee, 20 August 1764, cited by Kea, "Akwamu-Anlo Relations", in THSG. Vol. X. (1969) p. 37.

2. Huydecoper & Council (EC) to Amsterdam, 15 October 1764 (WIC 115).

3. EC Journal, entry, 9 February 1763 (NBKG 124).

4. Mutter (CCC) to the Committee, 27 May 1764 (T70/31).

To Pobi Enimil applied for Asare's extradition to Wassa to face justice. But Pobi refused to deliver him up. The stand of the Abuakwakene was unfortunate for the southern alliance. By October 1764 it had led to the straining of relations between the two states.<sup>1</sup>

A much greater harm to the alliance, however, was the withdrawal of Denkyerahene Owusu Bore from it in 1765. The immediate cause of the withdrawal was Denkyera's secret understanding with Asante. Reports reaching the coast said that the

"King of Dinkira, was suspected by his allies above mentioned of carrying on a correspondence privately with the Ashantees and of having formed a design of abandoning his own country in order to assist the Ashantees in destroying the other nations in alliance with them.

Accordingly when the Warsaws panniares (sic) Ashantees ..... Ousbody<sup>2</sup> [Owusu Bore] insisted on their being set at liberty. The Warsaws and their allies refused to do this and being now convinced of Ousbody's underhand practice, there more determined to put him to death, and fixed upon the next Saturday for putting their scheme in execution. However, Ousbody on the Thursday morning preceeding, fell upon them at 5 o'clock, and as they had not the least intention of his design, nothing could save them but their heels; a considerable number were killed and many taken prisoners; who, it seems, afterwards made their escape, and it is thought that the booty in gold and agree [Agore] beads will be very considerable .... The King of Dinkirah and his people immediately set out, and have fixed their camp about half-way between Warsaw and Ashantee. The Ashantees now give out that they will join the Dinkirahs and then attack the Warsaws, Akims, and Tufferoes, in which case they [Asante] will, in all probability, become masters and consequently force trade to the waterside [coast]"<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Mutter (CCC) to the Committee, 21 January 1765 (T70/31).
  2. i.e. the Denkyerahene.
  3. Mutter (CCC) to the Committee, 25 April 1765 (T70/31).

The change in the fortunes of the Alliance reflected current dynamic leadership in Asante. "Zey Commah" (i.e. Osei Kwadwo), had succeeded to the Golden stool following the destoolment of Kusi Obodum. The new Asantehene was "young, war-like, enterprising", and religiously committed to the policy of total destruction of his enemies, namely members of the southern alliance, or the remnant of it, made up of Akyem Abuakwa, Twifo, and Wassa. By mid-1765 he had declared war, overtly against the entire alliance but covertly against Abuakwa alone.<sup>1</sup>

The Alliance's forces rallied at a place called "Benda" (Benna) which was about forty miles to the north of Cape Coast.<sup>2</sup> Here the fate of the southern alliance and its pivot, Akyem Abuakwa, was sealed. For it was at this juncture that Asante subversive diplomacy worked extra hard to effect a greater damage to the alliance than the Denkyera perfidy. Twifo and Wassa also withdrew from it. Their forces left Benna and quartered themselves at a place called "Ahiman" (?Heman), allegedly at the instigation of Asante.<sup>3</sup> Thus by July 1765 the twenty-three year old grand alliance of the southern states had completely disintegrated, leaving Akyem Abuakwa, its pivot, to face the brunt of Asante fury, led by Osei Kwadwo, a young and virile King who was as anxious to win his spurs as Pobi was keen to re-establish the pre-1742 Abuakwa domination in the south-east.

Hostile relations with Fante worsened the situation for Abuakwa. Before Asante took up arms against

---

1. Mutter to Committee, 20 July 1765, T70/31.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Mutter to the Committee, 25 April, 1765 T70/31.



the south, Abuakwa was already at war with Fante. The immediate cause of the war is uncertain. Most probably Fante, like Asante, had come to the conclusion that Abuakwa was the main-stay of the southern alliance and therefore the chief promoter of the economic blockade against Asante by which the Fante were losing trade profits. It is equally possible that Abuakwa initiated the war to please Wassa and thereby recover its tarnished image with that state owing to the Asare affair. Whatever the immediate cause of the war, by June 1765 the fortunes were favouring Pobi. The imminent Abuakwa success seems to have forced Fante to reach the final pact with Asante, spoken of by Margaret Priestley.<sup>1</sup> For it was precisely at this juncture that Asante took the field against Abuakwa.<sup>2</sup>

Abuakwa could not cope with the increase in the enemy forces. The war with Fante had naturally weakened her militarily. And deserted by their allies, the Abuakwa, in the war with Asante, fell "an easy prey into the hands of their enemies, [but] a considerable number [of them], it is said, ..... escaped and are at present [July 1765] in or near their own country."<sup>3</sup>

The Benna War, as Abuakwa calls it,<sup>4</sup> was a disaster for her. Among the fallen or captured was

1. M. Priestley, "Richard Brew: an Eighteenth Century Trader at Anomabu", in THSG Vol. IV Pt. 1 p. 38.
2. E. C. Journal, entry, 13 June 1765, NBKG 126 .
3. Mutter (CCC) to the Committee, 20 July 1765, T70/31 .
4. AAT: Pamen (1925/6). Reindorf (History, p. 81) is therefore wrong in giving this name to the 1742 war. The Pamen tradition tallies with documentary evidence.

Pobi himself. There are conflicting contemporary pieces of evidence as to who killed Pobi, the Fante or Asante. The Dutch in June 1765 claimed that he was captured by the Asante.<sup>1</sup> But the English in July said "Poby ..... is a prisoner among the Fantees".<sup>2</sup> The Dutch assertion seems to gain strength from the view held in early nineteenth century that Abuakwahene Atta Owusu (1807-1811) hated Asante because Asantehene Osei Kwadwo had killed a predecessor of Atta's.<sup>3</sup> Possibly Pobi was captured by neither the Fante nor the Asante, but committed suicide when the day was lost.<sup>4</sup> For one thing neither Asante nor Fante claim to have taken possession of Pobi's skull, something Asante in particular would have prided itself in having as<sup>a</sup> precious war trophy. For another Abuakwa tradition simply states that Pobi and several of his chiefs fell in the war, possibly an allusion to suicide. Whatever the manner by which Pobi met his death, Abuakwa losses in killed or captured appear to have been heavy. Osei Kwadwo is reported to have executed "more than four hundred Akims".<sup>5</sup> Besides, the slave markets on the coast became so flooded immediately after the war that prices suddenly fell.<sup>6</sup> Indeed

---

1. E.C. Journal, entry, 17 June 1765, NBKG 126 .

2. Mutter to the Committee, 20 July 1765, T70/31 , cf. also Priestley in J.A.H. Vol. II (1961) p. 43.

3. See Chapter 5 p. 166 below.

4. Fynn, Asante, p. 100.

5. Letter from Kormantse, 2 July 1765 NBKG 126 .

6. Mutter's Report of 20 July 1765 T70/31 . Mutter said male slaves sold at 6 or 7 ozs. of gold while price for female slaves was 4 or 5 ozs. He however, did not state the prices prior to the Benna War.

the view prevailed in 1766 that Abuakwa was a destroyed nation.<sup>1</sup> But this seems to have been an exaggeration. The Abuakwa had merely been defeated in a battle. They had no intentions to submit to Asante. For they quickly retreated into their own country in order to regroup their forces,<sup>2</sup> thanks to a breakdown of the Fante-Asante alliance.

The cause of the breakdown has been traced to unwarranted Asante entry into Fante territory after the Benna war.<sup>3</sup> This view appears to be only part of the cause. Fante betrayal of trust was probably another and perhaps a greater cause. During the Benna war, the Fante seized many Asante subjects, besides a large number of the defeated Abuakwa, and quickly sold them into slavery; moreover, the Fante denied Osei Kwadwo permission to sell Akyem prisoners of war directly to the forts in Fante.<sup>4</sup> Consequently for several days, according to Mutter, there were skirmishes between the two until lack of provisions and an outbreak of smallpox in the Asante camp forced Osei Kwadwo to withdraw his army from Fante.

The Fante feared that Asante might strike again. This fear drove the fickle Fante to seek alliance once more with Wassa and Twifo. But as the recent perfidy of the Fante was too fresh in their minds, these two nations were not

---

1. John Hipposley (CCC) to the Committee, 2 March 1766, (T70/31).

2. Mutter's Report, 20 July 1765.

3. Priestley & Wilks, in JAH Vol. I No. 1 (1960) p. 94; Priestley in THSG. Vol. IV Pt. 1. (1959) p. 38; Priestley in JAH Vol. II 1961) p. 43.

4. Mutter's 20 July Report, cf. also Tenkorang, "Firearms", in THSG Vol. IX p. 10.

enthusiastic about such an alliance, not even when the Fante leaders undertook to give up, as hostages, important Fante personalities to back their word.<sup>1</sup> The reluctance of Wassa and Twifo may also have been partly due to the intrigues of the Dutch who were trying to persuade them against the alliance.<sup>2</sup> All this shows rank particularism among the southern states, a deficiency which made them incapable of forging a genuine and sustained united front against their common enemy, Asante. Little wonder that up to the 1770s many of them were in imminent danger of being attacked by that power.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately for them Asante was unable to strike immediately as was expected. Opinion was divided in Kumasi as to the wisdom of a new invasion of the south. One view, held by the more youthful party, supported by the vigorous Osei Kwadwo and the Queenmother, favoured such a measure. But "the oldest councillors endeavoured to divert him [Osei Kwadwo] from his design."<sup>4</sup>

This considerable internal instability in Asante proved very useful to Abuakwa. It prevented Asante from following up its success in 1765 with further pressures on Abuakwa.

---

1. Mutter to the Committee, 25 October 1765 (T70/31).

2. Ibid.

3. Hippersley (CCC) to Committee, 13 July 1766; Gilbert Petrie (CCC) to the Committee, 13 September & 20 October 1766; same to same, 31 January, 9 October 1767, 10 February, 31 March, 27 August and 21 October 1768; David Mill (CCC) to the Committee, 22 June 1772 (T70/31).

4. Hippersley (CCC) to the Committee, 20 March 1766, (T70/31).

Meanwhile Obirikoran succeeded to the Abuakwa stool.<sup>1</sup> His was a very difficult inheritance. In twenty-three years the Abuakwa had suffered two disastrous defeats at the hands of Asante, the second defeat occurring barely a few months before his accession to the Abuakwa stool. Continued resistance seemed to promise nothing but further disaster, while submission would of course compromise the independence of Akyem Abuakwa. Obirikoran's subsequent activities show that he, like Pobi, his immediate predecessor, was determined to resist Asante to the best of his ability. The only difference between the two was that Obirikoran was prepared to temper resistance with submission in order to gain temporary respite and muster forces once more against the enemy.

The military situation after the 1765 war was most unwholesome for Abuakwa. Obirikoran decided to submit to Kumasi. Fortunately for him Asante too desired peace. Fante, Twifo, and Wassa had renewed the economic sanctions against Asante by blocking the trade routes to the western sector of the coast.<sup>2</sup> Peace with Abuakwa would therefore assure Asante access to the European trade on the eastern sector of the coast.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore not unreasonable to imagine Asantehene Osei Kwadwo taking the initiative, as Opoku Ware had done after the 1742 war, to cox Abuakwa to a peace settlement. At any rate in or about February 1766

---

1. AAT: Pamen (1925/6).

2. Tenkorang, "Firearms", in THSG Vol. IX (1968) pp. 11-12.

3. Gilbert Petrie (CCC) to the Committee, 13 September 1766, T70/31.

Obirikoran accepted allegiance to Asante in principle and promised to go to Kumasi at the appropriate time to formally swear the oath of allegiance to the Golden Stool.<sup>1</sup> Hipplesley was probably referring to this submission in March 1766 when he said that war stores the Akyem were purchasing in that month were "professedly for their new masters".<sup>2</sup> The submission does not appear to have very seriously affected the prestige of Abuakwa in south-eastern Gold Coast. For in late 1766 both black and white were anxiously awaiting an expected visit of Obirikoran to the Ga coast.<sup>3</sup>

In reality the submission was a move to gain time and ease the military pressure on Abuakwa. For in 1767 Obirikoran renewed hostilities against Asante.<sup>4</sup> He blockaded the eastern trade routes against Asante access to the trade on the coast. To ensure full success of the blockade he re-established Abuakwa's links with Akuapem and Krobo. While the sanction was primarily directed against Asante, it enabled him to resuscitate the old trans-Volta policy of harassing Akwamu. Early in 1767 he raised a motley army of Abuakwa, Akuapem and Krobo soldiers, later joined by the Krepi, with which he invaded Voltaic Akwamu.<sup>5</sup> The venture was

- 
1. EC Journal, entry 29 February; Pieter Woortman (Accra) to EC, referred to in EC journal, entry 16 March; same to same, 12 April; EC journal, entry 16 April 1766, NBKG 127.
  2. Hipplesley (CCC) to the Committee, 20 March 1766, T70/31.
  3. E.C. journal, entry 12 September; Woortman (Accra) to EC, 17 September 1766, NBKG 127.
  4. Petrie (CCC) to the Committee, 20 August 1767, T70/31; Priestley, in T.H.S.G. Vol. IV Part I p. 45.
  5. EC Journal, entry, 28 February; Director-General Huydecoper (EC) to Woortman (Accra), 4 March; EC Journal, entry, 21 March 1767 (NBKG 128).

successful. He defeated Akwamu, and forced Akwamuhene Daako to seek safety on an island in the Volta.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally Asante became alarmed at the rate of Abuakwa resilience. The Asantehene tried to exploit the attack on Akwamu to remind Obirikoran that he was still vassal to Asante: Osei Kwadwo requested the Abuakwahene, as well as the Akwamuhene to come to Kumasi for a settlement of their differences.<sup>2</sup> Obirikoran refused to comply. By 1768 he was feeling strong and bold enough to demand, and did secure, the ground-rents of all the Accra forts.<sup>3</sup> Open compliance with Obirikoran's request by the European trading companies could well lead to misunderstandings between them and Asante. Consequently some of the authorities of the European forts, Christiansborg for example, took the precaution to describe the money paid to Obirikoran as a commission for his overriding ability to drive trade to the coast.<sup>4</sup> The English also seem to have taken a similar precaution because in spite of the payment they made to the Abuakwahene, they still retained the Asantehene on their pay roll, paying him one benda of gold per month.<sup>5</sup> But, however successful they were in deceiving

- 
1. Woortman (Accra) to Huydecoper (EC), 16 March 1767 (NBKG 128).
  2. Woortman to Huydecoper, 15 April; EC Journal, entry, 20 April 1767 (NBKG 128).
  3. Lise M. Johannese (CCO) to Copenhagen, 12 March 1768 (Vgk); EC Journal, entry, 3 April 1768 (NBKG 129).
  4. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 4 December 1768 (Vgk).
  5. James Fort (Accra) Daybooks, entries, January, February, September, October, November and December 1768, T70/979.

the Asante court, there can be no doubt that the European Companies were clearly responding to the resurgence of Akyem Abuakwa in the south-east.

Asante declaration of war in mid-1768 against it<sup>1</sup> also emphasized the Abuakwa resurgence. Battles were fought during the months of August and November 1768. Abuakwa again suffered a defeat and Obirikoran, attempting his first armed confrontation with Asante, had to take to his heels, fleeing, with the remnant of his subjects, to a place described as between Akuapem and Asante.<sup>2</sup> A place between Akuapem and Asante could well be a reference to either the mountain fastness of the Begoro district or Kwawu, if the latter was not vassal to Asante. But two defeats in three years appear to have discouraged Abuakwa, and Obirikoran was obliged to submit to Asante power. He visited Kumasi in early 1769 to swear the oath of allegiance to that power.<sup>3</sup>

With the Abuakwa submission vanished any desire of Akuapem and Krobo to be hostile to Asante. They too went on their knees before Asante. In January 1770, Obirikoran, accompanied by some of his own subjects, Asante envoys, as well as Akuapem and Krobo ambassadors, arrived in Accra. There were two conflicting views as to the purpose of his visit. The Dutch said he had come to raise a loan of "100 bendas" of gold ~~with~~ from the European Companies

---

1. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 21 July 1768, Vgk.

2. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 1 November 1768 Vgk.

3. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 9 March 1769 (Vgk); de Graft (Accra) to EC, 13 January 1770 (NBKG 131).



to defray the heavy expenses he had incurred at the Asante Court during his 1769 visit thither.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch Director-General advised against the advance of the loan. De Graft the Dutch factor at Fort Crevecoeur in 'Dutch' Accra, thought the advice was unfortunate as the Danes and English had advanced loans to Obirikoran without any pre-conditions.<sup>2</sup> De Graft was perhaps considering the possibility of Abuakwa driving all its trade to only the Danish and English Forts. This interpretation derives its strength from what the English gave as the object of Obirikoran's visit. They said that

"Abricoan Obirikoran, King of Akim ..... came with a good number of Ashantees, Hill country Akuapem and Crobbo Caboceers to clear the paths from pirates and get trade down to the waterside coast in safety."<sup>3</sup>

The readiness with which the Danes and English gave out the loan to the Abuakwahene finds explanation here. These pieces of evidence show that the visit probably had a dual purpose. Obirikoran perhaps hoped to raise a loan ~~from~~ the European companies and at the same time help lift the economic sanctions which he himself had largely engineered against Asante prior to his defeat in 1768.

The submission, though it compromised Abuakwa's independence, did not seriously affect the high esteem

1. De Graft (Accra) to EC, 24 January, EC Journal, entry 29 January 1770 (NBKG 131) The names of the Asante envoys were given as "Etja Corrie" (?Atakora) & "Dekye" (?Denkyi).
2. P. Woortman (EC) to de Graft, 3 February; de Graft to Woortman 23 February 1770 (NBKG 131); cf. also Noregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 126.
3. James Fort (Accra) Daybooks, entry, 18 January 1770 (T70/979).

which the peoples of south-eastern Gold Coast conferred on the Abuakwahene. Akuapem Krobo and Ada, for example, looked up to him for direction and assistance. There is no indication to suggest any Asante attempt to deprive Abuakwa of Old Akwamu as a province, as Asantehene Opoku Ware I had hoped to do in the 1740s.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the Ada, far away at the mouth of the Volta, were said to be vassal to Abuakwa.<sup>2</sup> The Asantehene even appears to have pampered Obirikoran. Barely four months after his submission, the Asante Court not only allowed, but assisted him with an army of about seven thousand strong, to raid some of the Lower trans-Volta states, especially Anlo, for slaves so as to be in a position to defray expenses incurred at Kumasi and to pay his debts to the European companies.<sup>3</sup> The Volta venture was intended also to assist the Ada against the Anlo.<sup>4</sup> To ensure the success of the expedition, Obirikoran raised a motley army of Akyem, Akuapem and Krobo soldiers. Great panic seized the Ga-Adangbe area on this occasion, an evidence of Abuakwa resurgence in the south-east. The Dutch appealed directly to Obirikoran not to molest any of their local allies.<sup>5</sup> In July 1770 Obirikoran crossed the

---

1. See Chapter 3 p.113 n.2above.

2. Pieter Woortman (Accra) to EC, 15 June 1770, NBKG. 131.

3. Woortman to EC, 4 June; EC Journal, entry, 9 June 1770, NBKG. 131.

4. Woortman to EC, 15 June 1770, NBKG 131; R.A. Kea, "Akwamu-Anlo Relations, c. 1750-1813," in THSG Vol. X (1969) pp. 37-38.

5. P. Woortman (Accra) to EC, 9 & 27 June; EC Journal, entry, 30 June 1770 (NBKG-131).

Volta with his army, stormed two Anlo towns and threatened to do same to the Anlo capital as well as Akwamu. But Anlo, possibly assisted by Akwamu,<sup>1</sup> gallantly met the invaders, and eventually repulsed them, taking captive of about five hundred of Obirikoran's men.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of this set back the Abuakwahene was determined to continue the campaign against Anlo. He was, however, prevented from taking further action by an order from the Asante court that he should put a stop to his hostile activities in the trans-Volta region.<sup>3</sup> The Asantehene probably had not anticipated that the Abuakwa expedition would affect Voltaic Akwamu, friends of Asante. It is even possible that Anlo too enjoyed Asante patronage at this early date though our present knowledge of the subject does not provide a clear evidence to that effect.<sup>4</sup> The order, together with the defeat he had sustained, apparently obliged Obirikoran to withdraw from the Trans-Volta. He however, could not completely reconcile himself to the failure and frustrations he had experienced. He held Asante partly responsible for his discomfiture. For in 1771, assisted by Okuapemhene Atiemo, he once more revolted

- 
1. A. Gijl (Ponny) to EC, 22 July; N. W. Krugger (Tema) to EC, 26 July 1770 (NBKG 132); also Kea, op. cit. p. 37 n.53.
  2. Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 26 July 1770 (Vgk) Krugger (Tema) to EC. 26 July; Froelick & Woortman (Accra) to EC. 27 July; Gijl (Ponny) to EC. 27 July 1770 (NBKG 132) Kea, op. cit. p. 38 nn. 54 & 55.
  3. Krugger (Tema) to EC; 26 July 1770 (NBKG 132); Wilks MA Thesis (Unpublished) p. 134; Kea, op. cit., p. 38 n. 56.
  4. There was such a relationship between the two in the nineteenth century. Cf. chapter 9 p. 323 below.

against Asante, organized a blockade of the 'eastern' trade routes against that power, and disobeyed an order from the Asante court to proceed to Accra and swear to the Dutch that he would keep the trade routes open.<sup>1</sup> Asante was left with no other choice than to take the field once more against Akyem Abuakwa. Osei Kwadwo in early 1772 raised an army of about 30,000 for the Akyem invasion.<sup>2</sup> The war, however, did not break out till about late that year.

In January 1773 an English report said that Abuakwa gained the initial advantage in the war but eventually became frightened by the sheer numerical superiority of the adversary. Consequently Obirikoran abandoned his country, sent his womenfolk and children into hiding in the mountain fastness of Krobo and headed southwards with his army.<sup>3</sup> Lack of allied assistance partly obliged the Abuakwahene to take to his heels. He had sounded the Krobo for help, but the latter merely agreed to shelter Abuakwa women and children.<sup>4</sup> Akuapem does not seem to have been interested. And an appeal to the Ga yielded no good result. In November 1772 he sent messengers to publicise in Accra Asante tyranny towards him and the Asantehene's determination to have his head just because he would not yield to his exorbitant demands; the messengers were also to ask for Ga military

---

1. Woortman (Accra) to EC. 11 December 1771 (NBKG 134).

2. Woortman (Accra) to EC, 12 January 1772 (NBKG 136), James Fort (Accra) Daybooks, entry, 29 November 1772 (T70/979).

3. David Mill (CCC) to the Committee, 30 January 1773, T70/31.

4. Kioge (Ada) to CCO, 21 December 1772, Vgk; Sekretprotokoller.

aid in the war against Asante.<sup>1</sup> To get involved with an Asante invading army was something the Ga least desired. For that reason they advised Obirikoran and his people to seek protection in eastern Fante.<sup>2</sup> Obirikoran and his army took the Ga advice and they sought refuge in eastern Fante after initially heading towards Ga. There in Fante, the pursuing Asante army dared not attack him for fear that he might strike an alliance with Fante.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the departure of the Abuakwa army from the Ga area, the Commander-in-Chief of the Asante invading force, "Adoocei" (i.e. Adusei) was still suspicious of Ga loyalty. To put the matter beyond doubt he subjected the Ga to serious interrogation. On 10th December 1772, the English recorded the arrival in Accra of

"Ancrah [Ankra], one of the Zey's captains, with two other captains and upwards of 700 soldiers, to this [James Fort] and other forts, desiring to know what they had to expect from Accra in general, and at the same time demanding every Akim and Hill country [Akuapem] that were about, and requesting presents for the Commanding Officer, Adoocei, who, by Ancrah, gave assurances of his good disposition towards the English".<sup>4</sup>

What the Ga did or said to prove their loyalty is not known for certain. The invading Asante army seems to have been / satisfied with Ga sincerity. All the same its presence in the Ga vicinity brought untold hardships to the inhabitants. Aside from paying "appeatoo" (war-tax) which Captain Ankrah

- 
1. James Fort Daybooks, entry, 17 October 17 and 27 November 1772, T70/979.
  2. James Fort Daybook, entry, 27 November 1772, T70/979.
  3. David Mill (CCC) to the Committee, 30 January 1773, (T70/31).
  4. James Fort (Accra) Daybooks, entry, 10 December 1772, (T70/979).

cleverly chose to describe as presents, the Ga experienced shortage of provisions: the Asante army of occupation demanded every available food.<sup>1</sup> It was not until March 1773 that the army left for Old Akwamu, on the first stage of their homeward journey.<sup>2</sup> Thus Asante failed to achieve the main objective of the invasion of Abuakwa, namely the defeat and decapitation of Obirikoran. In fact Asante was never able to effect a military solution to the Abuakwa Question up to about 1783.

Aside from the guerrilla tactics of Abuakwa, other factors militated against Asante success. Developments in the west engaged its serious attention. Wassa was still a thorn in its side; the Fante Confederate states played a double game against Asante. The Fante pretended to be disposed towards a peace settlement with Asante,<sup>3</sup> but in 1775 when Asante invaded Wassa, Fante turned coat and went to the assistance of Enimil who succeeded in beating back the Asante.<sup>4</sup> The successful resistance of Abuakwa in the east and Wassa in the west meant a blockade of Asante access to the coast trade between Takoradi and Ada. The blockade forced Asante to renew contact with the Nzima coast in order to procure firearms from there. Though she succeeded

- 
1. Vanderpuije (Accra) to EC, 1 May 1774, (NBKG 139).
  2. Aarestrup (CCO) to Copenhagen, 7 March 1773. Kea must be referring to this incident when he says that at this time Asante informed Akwamu about a projected Asante expedition against Akyem, cf. THSG, Vol. X (1969) p. 38.
  3. J. M. Cleland's Evidence before the Privy Council, 1792 (T70/161 p. 56), cited by Tenkorang, "in THSG. Vol. IX (1968) p. 14 n. 64.
  4. Fort William (Anomabo) Daybooks, entry, 10 November 1775 (T70/990); CCC Daybooks, entries 16 & 22 November 1775 (T70/1037); Richard Miles to the Council (CCC), 24 November 1775 (T70/1534), all cited by Tenkorang, op. cit. p. 14 n. 65.

in doing this in 1780, by 1785, Wassa was keenly contesting that access too.

Asante pre-occupation with affairs in the west, gave Obirikoran a freer hand in the east. After the departure of Adusei and his army, he also moved into Old Akwamu.<sup>1</sup> He was still there in 1774.<sup>2</sup> His residence in Old Akwamu, (what is now the Kyebi area) was in response to a change in Asante strategy in its relations with Abuakwa. Asante diplomacy, or rather subversion, had caught hold of "Old Akim", as the Dutch called the Bansa metropolitan area, where part of the Abuakwa ruling house still resided. By March 1775 it was known on the coast that Twum Ampofo,

"the youngest brother of Ebicoram Obirikoran, who is the Head Chief in Old Akim, has reconciled with the King of Assiantyn, and that the same has sent him much help and made him King of Akim".<sup>3</sup>

But there was no doubt in the minds of discerning observers on the coast that Obirikoran was still a political force in Akyem. The Danes for example doubted if Asante could ever have it easy in Abuakwa as long as Obirikoran lived. The truth was that Obirikoran, now domiciled in "new Akyem" (i.e. Old Akwamu) vis-a-vis Old Akyem (i.e. Bansa) was still a strong force in the south-east.

- 
1. Woortman (Accra) to EC, 24 April 1773 (NBKG 137); Wilks; 1958 M.A. Thesis (unpublished), p. 134, where he cites an earlier Woortman report in connection with the same subject.
  2. Vanderpuije (Accra) to EC, 1 May 1774 (NBKG 140); James Fort (Accra) Daybooks, entry 18 March 1774 (T70/978).
  3. Letter from Breku, 16 March 1775 (NBKG 141) cf. also Governor & Council (CCO) to Copenhagen, 28 May 1775 (Vgk?)

All the same the political division was unfortunate for Abuakwa. Apart from impairing its resistance against Asante, the split helped the European trading companies to exploit it in their quarrels. For example during the Danish-Dutch conflicts of the 1776-1778 period, the Danes invited aid from Ampofo while the Dutch solicited the help of Obirikoran.<sup>1</sup> The house of Abuakwa was thus divided against itself. Had Asante found it convenient to exploit this situation fully Abuakwa would have paid dearly for its disunity. Fortunately Asante was more pre-occupied with affairs in the south-west.<sup>2</sup>

Obirikoran visited Ga in 1780 in order to attend the funeral of the Mantse of Osu. For his friendship and services both the Dutch and the English on this occasion showered presents on him. The presents which the English Commandant of James Fort gave him included clothing as well as arms and ammunition. In return Obirikoran promised to reopen the trade routes in order that trade might once more flow from the interior to the coast.<sup>3</sup> Asante and their Abuakwa collaborators might regard him as deposed but to the inhabitants of the Ga area, he was still the Abuakwahene. This is a clear proof that his so-called deposition was not effective. Asante conceded this point in 1783 and opened peace negotiations with him.<sup>4</sup> They eventually "reinstated" Obirikoran as King of all Abuakwa after he had agreed to pay

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 94; Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 136.

2. Vanderpuije (Accra) to EC, 29 June 1780, NBKG 151.

3. James Fort Day-books, entry 29 June 1780, T70/978.

4. James Fort Day-books, entry 29 January 1783, (T70/980).



a fine to the Asante court.<sup>1</sup> The truth is that Asante was in dire need of peace with Obirikoran. For one thing peace with Obirikoran would give Asante access to the Ga coast while Wassa was still putting impediments in their way to the west coast. For another, Osei Kwadwo had died, so Asante could come to peace settlement with Obirikoran without much loss of face.

A year after the peace pact, Obirikoran, the bug-bear of the Asante drive to the eastern sector of the coast, died. In January 1784 the English Commandant of James Fort recorded presents he gave to messengers

"sent by Biramquoy's successor, King of Akim, who came to inform me of Biramquoy's death, and to assure me that he [the new Abuakwahene] had despatched messengers to Ashantee to acquaint that King that their [Asante] traders will not be molested in their passage to the waterside."<sup>2</sup>

The new Abuakwahene was no other than Twum Ampofo, the old protege of Asante. His message probably signified his anxiety to leave Asante in no doubt that a new era had dawned in Abuakwa-Asante relations. In consonance with his collaboration with Kumasi in the 1770s Twum Ampofo replaced the old Abuakwa policy of resistance, pursued with religious dedication by his immediate predecessors, with one of recognition of Asante supremacy and submission to it.

The effects of Obirikoran's death and Ampofo's departure from traditional Abuakwa hostility to Asante went beyond the boundaries of Akyem. Abuakwa's traditional ally,

---

1. Kystdokumenter paa Guinea, entry, 15 March 1783.

2. James Fort Daybooks, entry, 5 January 1784, T70/980.

Akuapem, was forced to review its unfriendly relations with Asante. Apparently deprived of Abuakwa's superior co-operation, Okuapemhene Atiemo rushed to Accra to assure the European trading companies of his determination to allow traders of all indigenous nationalities to pass through his kingdom unmolested.<sup>1</sup> The action was obviously meant to confirm his submission to Asante.

Abuakwa and Akuapem were sincere in their submission. In 1785 Asante campaigns in Nzima and Aowin disrupted trade in the western sector of the coast. But in the eastern section, the English for example were happy to note that trade was flourishing, with Asante having a substantial share in it.<sup>2</sup> Clearly Asante had at long last stamped its authority on the south-east.

Thus in relation to Asante the careers of Pobi and Obirikoran were a failure. Forty-two years of resistance to Asante overlordship had come to naught.

---

1. Kwamena-Pho, M.A. Thesis, p. 177.

2. James Morgue (CCC) to the Committee, 9 July 1785 (T70/32).

## CHAPTER 5

### UNDER ASANTE DOMINATION, 1785-1831

The Abuakwa resistance against Asante described in the preceding chapter was not altogether an unprofitable exercise. It eventually paved the way for integration between the Akyem and Old Akwamu districts. The submission to Asante did not reverse the integrational process. However, vassalage to Asante imposed on the Akyem states considerable disabilities and limitations which, given their ambition, they could not tolerate for long. From about 1810 they resolved to recover their freedom. To this end they made use of co-operation with other states subject to Asante as well as the British and the Danes.

A long term and a most significant effect of the Abuakwa resistance against Asante was the eventual incorporation of pre-1730 metropolitan Akwamu into the Kingdom of Akyem Abuakwa. A major objective of Asantehene Opoku Ware I (1717-1750) in going to war against Abuakwa and Kotoku in 1742 had been the restoration of the Akwamu to their pre-1730 inheritance, of which the Akyem had dispossessed them.<sup>1</sup> By 1783 when Abuakwa finally yielded to Kumasi domination, the Asante leaders seem to have lost interest in the restoration idea. Evidence is yet to be found that they attempted to implement it; and if they did, they must have found it a hopeless exercise. For it would seem that by the 1780s Old Akwamu either had become, or was

---

1. Cf. Chapter 3, p. 86 above.

on the way to becoming, an integral part of Akyem Abuakwa.

The integration was accelerated by the movement of the most important section of Abuakwa leaders, namely the paramount and Adonten lineages, from Akyem proper to settle in the pre-1730 Akwamu territory. The paramount stool settled at Kyebi from Bansa, and the Adonten stool, leaving Takyiman, settled at Kukurantumi.<sup>1</sup> That the areas where Kyebi and Kukurantumi were sited once formed part of Akwamu territory is vouchsafed by Akyem as well as Akwamu traditions.<sup>2</sup> There are two views as to when the paramount lineage settled at Kyebi: one says 1812 and the other about 1815.<sup>3</sup> There is reason to believe that neither of these two views is correct, and that the event seems to have occurred before, and not in or after, 1812. The Kyebi-Kukurantumi neighbourhood was linked to the Ga coast by a major trade route passing through Akuapem. For several years after the Akyem - Akwamu wars of 1729-1730, the route fell out of use; but by the 1780s it had been re-opened.<sup>4</sup> It is possible, as Johnson concludes, that the establishment of the paramount and Adonten stools at Kyebi and Kukurantumi "may have been connected with the re-opening of the route." Perhaps Obirikoran was the first Abuakwahene to have settled at Kyebi. He may have done so in the 1770s when Asante used his younger brother, Twum

---

1. AAT: Kukurantumi (1925/6).

2. Crowther, F., Papers laid before the West African Lands Commission, 1913, cited by M. Johnson, Migrants, p. 10, n. 31; AAT: Kukurantumi, Maase and Asafo (1925/6); Akwamu Tradition, as recorded by Field, Akim Kotoku, pp. 2-3.

3. M. Johnson, Migrants, p. 8; Ward, History, p. 208, n. 2.

4. Johnson, Migrants, p. II

Ampofo, to oust him from Bansa.<sup>1</sup> Obirikoran may, in all probability, be the Abuakwaahene who is said to have appealed to the Akwamu for land to settle on and was told to go to Akwamu hunters at 'Kyibi' for land.<sup>2</sup> Probably Obirikoran decided to make Kyebi the Abuakwa capital after his peace settlement with Asante in 1783. The creation of Kyebi as the Abuakwa capital however, did not mean total abandonment of Bansa: the latter was, and is still, used as the burial place for deceased Abuakwa royals.

The incorporation of Old Akwamu into the Abuakwa kingdom increased the size of the Akyem country. Its southern boundary shifted from the western confines of the Atewa-Atwiredu range to as far south as the Nyanao hill on the present day Nsawam - Adeiso - Asamankese road. Akuapem, Ga, Awutu (or eastern-most Fante) and Agona now became Akyem's southern neighbours.

The incorporation in turn led to the creation of a new category of chiefs, namely chiefs of nominal divisional status in Abuakwa. This is reflected in the Abuakwa constitution. Among the Old-Akwamu or pro-Akwamu communities were powerful ruling lineages such as those of Tafo, Otwereso, Asamankese and Akwatia.<sup>3</sup> Asamankese and Tafo for example were great land-owners.<sup>4</sup> Such powerful 'new' members of the

1. Cf. Chapter 4, pp. 154-156 above.

2. Field, Akim-Kotoku, pp. 2-3.

3. K. Ameyaw, Akwatia Tradition, I.A.S. Acc. No. KAG/2 & Asamankese Tradition, I.A.S. Acc. No. KAG/4, Legon.

4. Field, Akim-Kotoku, pp. 2-3; to this day the royal horn-blower of the Tafohene intones: "Kuro-wo-asase" (Tafo is a great Landowner). Personal communication from Tafohene Nana Okru Banin.

Abuakwa state were accorded the status of 'divisional' chiefs without controlling divisions separate from the five already in existence i.e. Adonten, Nifa, Benkum, Gyase and Oseawu.<sup>1</sup> Consequently today the Otweresohene is regarded as of equal status with the Benkumhene (Begorohene) though the latter is the substantive head of the Benkum (Left) Division; the Asamankesehene stands in a similar relation to the Wankyihene, head of the Oseawu Division.<sup>2</sup>

If vassalage to Asante did not disturb Abuakwa's integration with Old Akwamu, it did entail some serious disadvantages to Abuakwa as well as Kotoku. For example a newly installed Abuakwa or Kotoku ruler was obliged, by Asante imperial law, to visit Kumasi three years after his enstoolment in order to swear the formal oath of allegiance to the Asantehene. Akyem rulers were also required, by Asante law, to participate, either personally or by representation, in the annual Odwira festival at Kumasi; they had to take part in royal funeral rites there. With respect to royal funerals, they were obliged to provide human sacrificial victims whose blood was to water the 'grave' of the deceased Kumasi royal. Submission also imposed on the Akyem payment of annual tributes and prescribed taxes such as apeatoo (war tax). As gold-producing countries, Abuakwa and Kotoku would normally have paid the tribute in gold. But in the 1860s the Abuakwa recalled that part of it was paid in 'slaves' obtained from amongst the Abuakwa themselves and that so heavy was the obligation that Abuakwa population was

---

1. Danquah, Akan Laws, pp. 30-33.

2. Ibid., p. 32.

depleted.<sup>1</sup>

To ensure that the Akyem fully discharged such obligations, the Kumasi court stationed resident commissioners in Abuakwa and Kotoku. The resident commissioners probably had other duties such as preventing the Akyem from insulting Asante subjects.<sup>2</sup> The Commissioners were also expected to report the least indication of insurrection on the part of a subject state to the Asantehene. Abuakwa suffered considerably in this respect during the 1810-1811 period when it revolted. So vigilant and enthusiastic was Tano, the then Asante resident Commissioner in Abuakwa, that without even a prior reference to Kumasi, he raised a force to try and suppress the revolt.<sup>3</sup>

The Akyem states experienced a degree of interference in their foreign policy also. They could not wage wars on their own initiative without receiving prior permission from the Asantehene. The permission was not always given as Abuakwa discovered in the last years of the eighteenth century. Abuakwa in the 1780s and 1790s was

- 
1. Kyebi Tradition, as told Stromberg by Opanyin Apietu, "a grey-haired elder" of Kyebi. Cf. Stromberg (Kyebi) to Basel, 24 January 1863, No. Akim 17; Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 13 October 1869, No. Akim 16, BMA-PJC.
  2. In relation to Akuapem, A.R. Biorn said in 1788 that "the King of Ashantee retained a high lieutenant [there] for the protection of his subjects from insults." Cf. A.R. Biorn, Beretning, p. 204. Biorn was made Governor of Christiansborg Castle in the 1790s.
  3. Cf. p. 170 below.

regarded as one of the powerful states in the Gold Coast. The Danes, for instance, paid tribute to the Abuakwahene, just as they did to the Asantehene and the King of Popo.<sup>1</sup> In 1791 Danish Governor Biorn of Christiansborg Castle appealed to Twum Ampofo, the Abuakwahene, for military assistance against Krepi, promising the Abuakwahene a subsidy valued at twelve slaves and two thousand rigsdaler. Ampofo agreed to help the Danes, but when he tried to seek permission from the Asantehene to enable him undertake the Krepi venture he met with a refusal.<sup>2</sup> The Danes attributed the refusal to Asante fear that the Abuakwa were probably contemplating migration to the trans-Volta.<sup>3</sup> This would suggest that Ampofo, once so enthusiastic about Abuakwa subservience to Asante,<sup>4</sup> was now finding the subordination intolerable. Anlo intrigues have also been suggested as having probably influenced the Asante decision, for the Anlo disliked Akyem Abuakwa on account of its cordial relations with Ada, an enemy of Anlo.<sup>5</sup> All these may be true but a third and perhaps the most plausible explanation is Asante desire to deprive Abuakwa of the subsidy to be paid to her by the Danes. This is suggested by the Asantehene's offer to

---

1. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 153.

2. Guinea Journal, entry, 6 February 1791, Vgk: Sager til V.J. No. 25, 1792; Norregaard, op. cit., p. 155; Kea, in THSG. Vol. X (1969) p. 42; Fynn, Asante, p. 130 n. 2. Kea ( Ph.D Thesis, pp. 39-42) thinks that by Krepi is meant little Popo.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. Chapter 4, pp. 154-6 above.

5. Fynn, Asante, p. 130. Anlo subservience to Asante is thus implied.



assist the Danes himself at a much higher subsidy.<sup>1</sup> After all in the event of an Asante war with Krepí, the Akyem states were obliged, by Asante imperial law, to join the Asantehene's army. Abuakwa thus suffered a triple loss: she was denied an opportunity to make a financial gain; she was deprived of a chance to increase her military and political prestige in the Gold Coast; and yet at the same time she was expected to sacrifice her subjects on the alter of Asante imperial wars. Only rulers like Twum Ampofo could tolerate such a situation as long as he did.

Fighting the wars of their imperial master was perhaps the greatest of the disabilities which the submission to Asante imposed on the Akyem states. In 1743-4 Akyem Kotoku joined Asante in its wars against Dagomba.<sup>2</sup> And so did Kotoku again, as well as Abuakwa during the Asante war against Assin Atannoso and Fante between 1800 and 1807.<sup>3</sup>

By the early nineteenth century changes had occurred in the ruling houses of both Abuakwa and Kotoku. According to Reindorf, not long before the Asante war with Assin in 1807, Ampoma, the Kotokuhene, died.<sup>4</sup> His death must have occurred in or just before 1800 because the Asante-Assin/Fante conflict had already started by then.<sup>5</sup> Kwadwo Kuma, Ampoma's nephew, was the most legitimate

1. Fynn, Asante, pp. 131-6.

2. See Chapter 4 p. 122 above.

3. The Akyem participation is fully discussed on pp. 165 167 below.

4. Reindorf, History, p. 139.

5. James Fort (Accra) Day books, entries, 10 & 26 February & 17 August 1800, T 70/982; Archibald Dalziel (CCC) to the Committee of African Merchants (CAM), London, 13 October 1800, T 70/34.

candidate to the Kotoku stool. He is said to have gone to Abuakwa to represent his uncle at a royal funeral and was still there when Ampoma died.<sup>1</sup> In his absence another candidate, Opoku, was enstooled as the new Kotokuhene.<sup>2</sup>

Possibly the royal funeral at Abuakwa was in connection with the death of Twum Ampofo who is said to have died in or about 1794.<sup>3</sup> The successor to the Abuakwa stool was Apraku. He and Opoku personally led the Abuakwa and Kotoku to join Asante against Assin Atanoso and Fante in the 1807 war.<sup>4</sup>

The immediate cause of this war was tension between the two principalities of Assin, namely Atanoso and Apemanim, and the former's rejection, in a most insolent and rude manner, of the efforts of the Asantehene to mediate between them.<sup>5</sup> The war had a very far reaching effect on relations between the Akyem states and Asante. It immediately led to further changes in the ruling personnel of both Abuakwa and Kotoku. While in the field Apraku is said to have unjustifiably executed four of his subjects. The rest of his subjects therefore declared their intentions to depose him, and carried

1. AKT: Awisa (1968/9).

2. Reindorf, History, p. 139.

3. Fynn, "Abuakwa King List."

4. Reindorf, History, pp. 139 and 141.

5. Torrane (CCC) to CAM, in Metcalfe, Documents p. 8; Meredith, H. Gold Coast of Africa, London 1812, pp. 132-3; Hutton, W., A Voyage to Africa, London 1821, p. 337. Cruickshank, Vol. I Chapter IV; Reindorf, History, pp. 138-9; Claridge Vol. I, pp. 238-9. Ward History, p. 148.

this into effect on returning home, even though the deposition was against the advice of the Asantehene.<sup>1</sup> Opoku of Kotoku was also distooled on similar grounds.<sup>2</sup> Atta Owusu, strong-named Yiakosan (The Valiant), was enstooled Abuakwahene after Apraku; and Kwakye replaced Opoku as Kotokuhene. Kwakye's enstoolment meant that Kwado Kuma who was still in Abuakwa had missed the Kotoku stool for a second time in succession.

The accession of Atta Owusu to the Abuakwa stool did not augur well for Akyem relations with Asante. Within three years after his enstoolment Abuakwa had raised the standard of rebellion against Asante. Atta was the main driving force behind the rebellion. For the fundamental cause of the rebellion was his dissatisfaction with the continued subservience of Abuakwa to Asante. He already bore Asante a grudge before he became Abuakwahene in 1807; Asantehene Osei Kwadwo had killed a predecessor of his.<sup>3</sup> This hatred increased in 1807 when Asantehene Osei Bonsu imposed a heavy burial tax on him. A relative of his is said to have fallen in the 1807 Asante-Assin-Fante war in which Atta himself had fought with distinction. He applied to the Asantehene for permission to give his deceased relative a formal burial.<sup>4</sup> The Asantehene then demanded "a large sum

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 141.

2. Ibid.

3. Cruickshank Vol. I, p. 92. It is not clear who this predecessor was; perhaps this may be a reference to Pobi who lost his life in war against Osei Kwadwo. Cf. Chapter 4 p.141 above. Claridge (Vol. 1 p. 263) gives the name of the Akyem Chief as "Ofusu", i.e. Ofosu. None of the eighteenth century Abuakwa Kings was called Ofosu.

4. Normally the Akan did not give formal burial to anybody who did not die a natural death.

of gold" from Atta before granting the permission. "This, together with other acts of oppression so irritated Attah that he determined on taking the first opportunity of resenting them."<sup>1</sup>

The opportunity came within three years after his enstoolment as Abuakwahene. In 1810 he was expected to pay an official visit to Kumasi in order to swear the oath of allegiance to the Asantehene. He refused to perform this vassal obligation. The Asante court sent to find out why he had not visited Kumasi. The query was compounded with a customary gift of 4 oz. of gold and a request that he should equip his army and join an Asante army which was about to take the field once more against Assin Atanoso and Fante. The cause of the new Assin-Asante war was the intransigence of Assin Atanoso and Fante. In spite of defeat in the 1807 war and the acceptance, on their behalf, of Asante overlordship, by Governor Torrane of Cape Coast Castle in June 1807, the Assin Atanoso and the Fante had refused to submit to Asante domination. Between 1808 and 1810 Atanoso and Fante demonstrated their dislike for Asante by attacking Elmina and Ga, the only two coastal peoples still friendly to Asante. The Asante army which the Akyem states were required to join was going to the rescue of Elmina and Accra. The anxiety of Asante to rescue Elmina and Ga was dictated by the fact that they were the only two places on the coast from which Asante could still obtain European goods, especially war stores.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Governor White (CCC) to C.A.M., 25 March 1811, T70/35; Metcalfe, Documents, pp. 17-18.
  2. White to CAM, 5 May & 26 December 1809, T70/35; Governor de Veer (EC) to White (CCC), 7 May 1810 T70/35; Hutton, A Voyage, p. 342.

The request gave Atta Owusu yet another chance to demonstrate his hatred for the Asante yoke. He calmly accepted the customary gift of gold and replied that he would certainly arm, not against Assin Atanoso or Fante, but against Asante itself.<sup>1</sup> To show that he was in earnest, he followed this declaration of his revolt with the arrest, detention, robbing and execution of all but one Asante traders and travellers, including Royal messengers, returning home from Ga, who happened to be passing through Akyem.<sup>2</sup> It is clear from the above that the rebellion was not fortuitous, having come about on account of the request to fight Asante's wars:<sup>3</sup> it was premeditated, awaiting execution at the appropriate time.

The period between 1808 and 1811 was very suitable for launching a revolt, because Asante was then experiencing almost universal provincial rebellion. Assin Atanoso was still in arms, and so was Fante.<sup>4</sup> Wassa revolted in 1809 by joining the Western Fante against Elmina.<sup>5</sup> Agona also revolted by siding with the eastern Fante against Ga.<sup>6</sup> Akuapem had revolted by 1809.<sup>7</sup> Information reaching Elmina

- 
1. White to CAM, 25 March 1811, T70/35. Cf. also Reindorf, History, pp. 152-3.
  2. Cruickshank, Vol. I, pp. 92-3; A.B. Ellis, A History of the Gold Coast (London 1893) p. 123; Reindorf, History, p. 153; Claridge Vol. I p. 263.
  3. Ward, History, p. 157.
  4. See p. 167 above.
  5. White to CAM, 26 December 1809, T70/35.
  6. A. de Veer (EC) to White (CCC), 7 May 1810, T70/35.
  7. Meredith, The Gold Coast, p. 167.

in February 1811 said Denkyera was also in rebellion.<sup>1</sup> At least Abuakwa, Akuapem, Denkyera and Wassa had all fought for Asante in the 1807 war. It was surely no coincidence that in a space of four years after 1807 they should all be in revolt against the overlord. Asante tyranny alone cannot be said to have produced all these almost concurrent rebellions. In the case of Akyem Abuakwa Atta Owusu was aggrieved because the Asantehene regarded him as a slave: in 1817 the Asantehene was to tell the members of the British mission to Asante that Kotokuhene Kwadwo Kuma was his slave.<sup>2</sup> Fante diplomacy also may have incited Abuakwa and the others to rebel. For Atta Owusu tried to co-operate with Fante against Asante.<sup>3</sup> In launching his rebellion Atta Owusu of Abuakwa surely must have taken into careful consideration the possibility of striking an alliance with some of the other rebel states, as he actually did with Akuapem, Agona, and the eastern Fante.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the other insurrections were bound to stretch Asante military resources to the full and thereby increase the chances of success for the Abuakwa rebellion.

Internal disunity nearly deprived the revolt of success. There was in Abuakwa a strong pro-Asante party which did not support the rebellion. Meredith was no doubt

---

1. De Veer's diary (EC), entry, 1 February 1811, WIC. 124A.

2. Beecham, J., Ashantee and the Gold Coast (London, 1841, 1968 ed.) p. 118.

3. See pp. 173 below.

4. See p. 173 below.

alluding to this disunity in 1812 when he said Atta, the Abuakwahene, "governed" the kingdom "in conjunction with Tando ..... and [Atta] was tributary to the King of Ashantee. He refused obedience to the King's orders by not going against the Fantees: which produced a dispute between himself and Tando, who drove him out of Akim ..."<sup>1</sup>

Bowdich's account of 1817 makes 'Tando' an Asante Resident Commissioner for Akyem Abuakwa, adding that he was retired for his conduct because

"though Attah was adjudged to be in fault, after the palaver was talked at Coomassie, the Ashantee government thought it politic to displace Tandoh, though he had become disagreeable to the other, only for his vigilance and fidelity."<sup>2</sup>

Asante resident commissioners did not possess standing armies to back their word in the provinces to which they were accredited. Tano could only have raised an army either from among the Abuakwa themselves, or from the Kotoku who seem to have been quite loyal to Asante. The first suggestion seems more probable. Oral traditional evidence suggests that there was a strong pro-Asante party in Abuakwa. Its leader was Bruku, the woman chief of Asiakwa, headquarters of the Nifa (Right) Division of the Abuakwa state.<sup>3</sup> The Asiakwa tradition finds support from Hutton who, in 1821, says that Bruku was the Asiakwa Chief in the 1810s.<sup>4</sup> She must have provided Tano with the army which he needed to challenge Atta. Of the five divisional chiefs of Abuakwa, only the Asiakwahene traced

1. Meredith, The Gold Coast, p. 169.

2. Bowdich, A Mission, p. 123.

3. AAT: Asiakwa (1925/6).

4. Hutton, A Voyage, p. 342.

ancestry to Asante. The founders of the Asiakwa ruling lineage are said to have come from Barekese, near Kumasi, during the reign of Asantehene Osei Tutu, and that they were of the Oyoko abusua.<sup>1</sup> Ancestry and clan ties would seem to have vitiated Asiakwa loyalty to Akyem Abwakwa, for the Asiakwa tradition goes on to say that during Bruku's time the Asiakwa tried to emigrate, back to Barekese, but were prevented from doing so by the rest of Abuakwa.

Asiakwa's treachery naturally would affect the fighting strength of Atta's army. At the height of his insurrection Atta's army was variously reckoned between three thousand and five thousand.<sup>2</sup> But he went ahead with the rebellion all the same. And the Asantehene determined to suppress him.

An Asante army of about ten thousand, under the command of Adusei Kra was sent against him.<sup>3</sup> Atta first encountered Adusei's force in or about September 1810.<sup>4</sup> The Abuakwa won the two battles which took place, and Adusei had to send home for reinforcement.<sup>5</sup> In response Asantehene Osei Bonsu instructed Opoku Frefre, initially detailed to go to the rescue of the Ga with a 25,000 strong army, to direct his course to Abuakwa, take over from Adusei, and suppress the Abuakwa revolt.

Opoku Frefre's entry into the war increased the

---

1. AAT: Asiakwa (1925/6).

2. Vanderpuije (Senya Breku) to de Veer (EC), 15 March 1811, WIC. 124A; Meredith, Gold Coast, p. 168.

3. Reindorf, History, p. 153.

4. Vanderpuije (Senya Breku) to de Veer (EC), cited in EC Journal, entry, 17 September 1810, WWIC 124.

5. Reindorf, History, p. 153.



formidability of the Asante army. Abuakwa countered this development with an alliance with Akuapem. The alliance was not difficult to contract. Akuapem was already in revolt against Asante.<sup>1</sup> Kumasi was thus a common enemy to both. Besides, clan and historical ties between the Abuakwa and Akuapem ruling houses,<sup>2</sup> made a concerted action against the common enemy all the more attractive. The alliance enabled the Abuakwa army to retreat southwards in order to join forces with the Akuapem, led by their King, Kwao Safrotwie. The allies made a stand against the Asante army at Mampon. There are two conflicting views on the outcome of the Battle of Mampon. While one gives victory to Asante,<sup>3</sup> the other says the allies had the edge over the adversary, who was obliged to appeal to the Ga for reinforcement.<sup>4</sup> The conflicting views suggest that the battles were keenly contested, and that probably they were indecisive.

The entry of the Ga into the war as allies of Asante widened the scope of the war for Abuakwa and Akuapem. It meant that they had to fight on two opposite fronts, against Opoku Frefre's Asante army in the north, and against the Ga in the south. Guerrilla warfare was the reply of the allies to this development. They separated: the Akuapem army headed first to the fastness of the Krobo hills and later on to Ada on the coast, with the Asante army in hot pursuit.<sup>5</sup> Atta Owusu and his Abuakwa forces

---

1. See p. 168            above.

2. Cf. Chapter 3 p. 81-83, and 86 above.

3. Reindorf, History, p. 154.

4. Cruickshank Vol. I PP. 93-4; Ellis (1893) p. 124; Claridge Vol. I p. 264; Ward, History, p. 158.

5. The most recent account on this aspect of the war is Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, pp. 86-87.

on the other hand went westwards to eastern Fante and Agona where another and a much smaller Asante army of about 4,000, under the command of Appia Dankwa, was harassing the inhabitants. Atta's aim was to fight this smaller army.

He arrived there in the early months of 1811. By then he had established a reputation as a very redoubtable warrior; the Agona and Fante flocked to join him against Asante.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was also indicative of this reputation that Opoku Frefre chose to pursue Kwao Safrotwie to Krobo and Ada and not Atta Owusu. For Appia Dankwa too became frightened at Atta's approach and tried to flee. But the Abuakwa army caught up with and defeated him in the Tantom hinterland before he could do so.<sup>2</sup>

The war with Asante made the Akyem Abuakwa hostile toward all those who were friendly, or in any way showed sympathy, with and support for that power. A section of the European trading presence on the coast had become quite partisan in its African relations. The Dutch for example were pro-Asante. On account of that Atta Owusu extended his hostility to the Dutch in the Fante district. After putting Appia Dankwa's army to flight, he ordered the siege of the Dutch fort, Lydzamheid, at Apam, destroyed a greater part of it, put the officials there to flight, and freed all African prisoners in the fort.<sup>3</sup> Besides, he threatened more

1. Meredith, Gold Coast, pp. 168-9.

2. White (CCC) to CAM, 25 March 1811, T 70/35; also in Metcalfe, Documents, pp. 17-18.

3. Nicron (Kormantse) to de Veer (EC), cited in EC Journal, entry, 11 March 1811, WIC. 124<sup>A</sup>.

destruction for the Dutch after he had fully settled scores with Asante.<sup>1</sup>

Parallel to the Akyem maltreatment of the Dutch at Apam and threat against the Dutch in general was Asante assault on the Danes. At Ada Opoku Frefre detained Mr. Flindt, the Danish factor at the fort there, for allegedly helping Kwao Safrotwie and his forces to escape at a time when the Asante army had almost cornered them.<sup>2</sup> At the foot of the Akuapem hills Opoku Frefre ordered the destruction of Danish coffee plantations jointly owned by Governor Schionning and a Mr. Meyer.<sup>3</sup> Opoku threatened the Danes with further destruction and death, if they did not end their support for Abuakwa and Akuapem.<sup>4</sup> It is clear from Opoku's declaration above that Danish friendship with the Akyem (Abuakwa) and Akuapem was the basic cause of the Asante hostility towards the Danes.<sup>5</sup> Governor Schionning, however, sought to ascribe the cause to Anglo-Dutch intrigues with Asante.<sup>6</sup> The English denied the charge, pointing out Danish sale of arms and ammunition to the

- 
1. Vanderpuije (Senya Breku) to de Veer, EC Journal, entry, 15 March 1811, WIC. 124<sup>A</sup>.
  2. Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, pp. 86-7.
  3. W. Hoitman (Accra) to EC, 17 March 1811, WIC. 124<sup>A</sup>.
  4. Dawson (James Fort, Accra) to Danish Governor Schionning (CCO), 17 June 1811, Diverse Arkivaler fra Guinea (DAFG) No. 50.
  5. Akyem-Danish relations are fully discussed in Chapter 6, ~~pp.~~ below.
  6. Schionning (CCO) to Dawson (James Fort, Accra), 17 & 20 June 1811, DAFG. 50.

Abuakwa and Akuapem as a source of the Asante anger against the Danes; and advised the Danes to be more discreet in their African relations.<sup>1</sup>

The British advice to the Danes was the result of personal experience. In 1807 they had supported the Fante and Assin Atanoso against Asante and had suffered terribly for that.<sup>2</sup> Consequently in the current upheavals they tried to observe strict neutrality, refusing to take sides with any of the combatants, even though Abuakwahene Atta Owusu tried to force them to declare against Asante. When Atta tried to levy apeatoo (war tax) on the English at Simpa (Winneba) the latter, led by Mr. Meredith, refused to pay the tax as such, contending that payment would imply English partisanship with Akyem, which was against their policy. Instead Meredith sent to the Abuakwahene presents "as a token of friendship, with an assurance of British desire to support strict neutrality."<sup>3</sup> This was a judicious stand. Neither the Akyem Abuakwa nor the Asante inflicted the slightest injury to British property and persons.

Success in Agona and Fante encouraged the Abuakwa to turn eastwards in order to attempt yet another confrontation with the much larger Asante army under the command of Opoku Frefre, then believed "to be at the back of Addah."<sup>4</sup> Misfortune, however, struck the Akyem cause at this

---

1. Dawson to Schionning, 21 June 1811, DAFG. 50.

2. For two days running an Asante army besieged Fort Williams at Anomabo.

3. Meredith, Gold Coast, p. 176; cf. also Metcalfe, Documents, p. 18; Cruickshank Vol. I p. 96.

4. White (CCC) to CAM, 23 May 1811, T 70/35.

juncture. Atta Owusu and his men had not gone further than the Agona town of Kwanyarko when he fell victim to an outbreak of smallpox and died a few days later.<sup>1</sup> The exact date of his death is not known. It must have occurred between 20th August when Governor White reported of the adverse effects of the war on trade<sup>2</sup> and 7th October when the news of Atta's demise reached Cape Coast, carried there by an official Abuakwa delegation.<sup>3</sup>

The war of liberation sustained a great loss in the death of Atta. Under him the Abuakwa had fought with "great courage" and inspiration.<sup>4</sup> Thirty-five years later it was said of him that he was a genius of a military leader whose patriotism, courage and implacable dislike for Asante domination would have enabled him to rescue his people from the clutches of Asante imperialism but for his untimely death.<sup>5</sup> He deserved the strong name 'Yiakosan' (The Valiant). The Asante themselves recognized his importance by recalling the armies of Appia and Opoku immediately upon receiving the news of his death, which was judged to mean the end of serious Akyem resistance. It was therefore a fitting tribute that his people commemorated, as they still do, his death with the 'national' oath "Kwanyarko": they deemed his death a great

---

1. White to CAM, 13 October 1811, T70/35; AAT: Pamen (1925/6).

2. White to CAM, 20 August 1811, T70/35.

3. CCC Daybooks, entry, 7 October 1811, T70/1099; White to CAM, 13 October 1811, T70/35.

4. White to CAM, 25 March 1811, T 70/35.

5. Cruickshank, Vol. I pp. 97-8.

'national' disaster.<sup>1</sup>

Atta's death had a great demoralising effect on the liberation movement. The two immediate successors to the Abuakwa stool lacked his dynamism. The first was Asare Bediako.<sup>2</sup> In 1812 Asare decided to emulate Atta's military activities by jointly organizing an attack on the Ga with Kwao Safrotwie of Akuapem and Aduku of Mankesim (Fante). The Ga venture failed miserably for this time Ga arms prevailed against the aggressors. But for the bravery of a lesser chief, Doku Sra of Pamen, the Abuakwa stool would have been captured by the Ga.<sup>3</sup> The misadventure had a disastrous effect on the Abuakwa ruling house, particularly Asare's line. The people of Abuakwa declared him an unlucky leader, deposed him and asked him and the closest of his relatives to commit suicide, which they did.<sup>4</sup>

Kofi Asante was enstooled as the new Abuakwahene. He was only a little better than Asare in terms of luck and exciting leadership.<sup>5</sup>

In the poor qualities of the two immediate successors of Atta seems to lie the source of the wrong notion that Kwadwo Kuma succeeded Atta.<sup>6</sup> Kuma came into the

1. Compare the Asante 'national' oath 'Kormante', in memory of the death of Asantehene Osei Tutu.
2. Reindorf, History, pp. 155-6; AAT: Pamen (1925/6). The view that Kwadwo Kuma succeeded to the Abuakwa stool after Atta Owusu is misleading. Cf. Cruickshank, Vol. I p. 99 & Ward, History p. 159. Kuma, as pointed out on pp. 164-5 above, was a Kotoku Prince. The source of the confusion is discussed on pp. 178 f. below.
3. AAT: Pamen (1925/6). Reindorf, History, p. 157, is of the opinion that the stool was actually captured. Perhaps the Pamen tradition implies that it was retrieved by Doku Sra.
4. Reindorf, History, p. 157; AAT: Pamen.
5. Cf. p. 181 f. below.
6. Cruickshank, Vol. I p. 99; Ward, History, p. 159.

forefront of the Akyem war of independence at this time by launching the Kotoku branch. He had preferred to reside at the Abuakwa court after failing to get the Kotoku stool on two consecutive occasions.<sup>1</sup> What he found attractive in Abuakwa may never be known directly. He seems to have been the adventurous type. Probably Atta Owusu's personality and policy in relation to Asante fascinated him. This is suggested by the fact that even though Kotoku, led by Kwakye, sided with Asante in the 1810-1811 war, Kuma chose to fight for Atta and Abuakwa. He paid dearly for this. Reindorf states that Kuma's closest relatives, including his mother and sister, as well as his aunt (on mother's side) and her daughter, were sent as prisoners to Kumasi where they were killed. Kumasi no doubt meant the punishment to be a reprisal against Kuma. It is equally possible that the 'prisoners' were sent to Kumasi on the initiative of Kwakye, with a view to destroying Kuma's line of successors to the Kotoku stool, and thereby eliminate opposition to the Kwakye line.

Ultimately Kwakye's collaboration with Kumasi, coupled with Asante cruelty, as shown by the execution of his mother and others, made Kwadwo Kuma even more determined to free Kotoku from the Asante yoke. After the failure of the Ga venture<sup>2</sup> he resolved to go back home and claim the stool from Kwakye. He gained the full support of Abuakwa leaders. Dokuwa, the Queen of Abuakwa, and Abuakwahene Kofi Asante reciprocated his services by providing him with men

---

1. Cf. pp. 165-166 above.

2. See p. 177 above.

and material. The gamble was successful. He defeated Kwakye in the Battle of Dampon.<sup>1</sup> Kwakye lost heart, gathered his close relatives, one of whom was his nephew Kofi Agyeman,<sup>2</sup> took the Kotoku stool, and fled with them to Asante. There he and his relatives were made guests of the ruling house of the small state of Bosome near Lake Bosomtwe.<sup>3</sup> But Kwakye died barely a month after his arrival in Asante.<sup>4</sup>

Kuma was enstooled as the new Kotokuhene. But he was a King without the stool of his ancestors. He therefore made efforts to get it back from Asante. According to Reindorf, he approached the important palatine state of Juaben to intercede with Kumasi for the Kotoku stool to be returned. But all he could get as a reward for his efforts was a message from Asante that he should go to Kumasi and get it. Of course it was dangerous for a rebel like him to set foot on Asante soil, and so he did not make any further efforts to recover the Kotoku stool. Instead he resolved to make Kumasi suffer for its intransigence and tyranny. For two good years between 1813 and 1814 he effectively blockaded the Akyem trade routes leading to the Ga-Winneba coast against Asante. So tight was the measure that it gave a relief to many of the southern states which had suffered recently from Asante political and military pressures.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 157.

2. Agyeman featured in Akyem as well as Gold Coast politics as from the 1820s, as we shall see in due course.

3. It would seem that by the 1810s the Boaman people who remained behind in 1706 when their ruler, Ntow Krobo, emigrated to Akyem (Cf. Chapter 2, pp43-5 above), had also adopted the name Bosome, by which the State founded by Ntow in Akyem was known.

4. Reindorf, History, pp. 157-8.

5. Cruickshank, Vol. I p. 101.



Increased Asante bitterness against him was of course the eventual heavy price Kuma had to pay for his success. In him Asante apparently saw another Atta Owusu. And so indeed was Kuma. Like the late Abuakwa warrior King, he did not limit his activities to the confines of Akyem district. He may have been the moving spirit behind the Akyem delegation which in 1813 went to Fante to whip up against Asante the Fante hatred which was said to be on the wane.<sup>1</sup> Akyem Kotoku rebellion was bad enough for Asante. But for rebel Kotoku to incite and sustain insurrection in other states was something Asante just could not tolerate for long. The Kwadwo Kuma phase of the rebellion in Akyem, rather than the failure to suppress Atta Owusu,<sup>2</sup> seems to have compelled Asantehene Osei Bonsu in 1815 to put a ten thousand strong army in the field against the Akyem.<sup>3</sup> It has often been said that Asante put a smaller army into the field, under Appia Dankwa, whose instructions were to block any possible retreat of the Akyem into Fante.<sup>4</sup> Appia was actually expected to go and suppress Denkyera and Wassa who were still in revolt.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. CCC Daybooks, entry, 23 April 1813, T70/1103.

2. Ward, History, p. 159.

3. Governor de Veer's Diary (EC), entry 8 August 1815, WIC. 124A. Cruickshank (Vol. I p. 101), Claridge (Vol. I p. 274) and Reindorf, (History, p. 158) all estimate the Asante army at 20,000.

4. Cruickshank, Vol. I p. 101, Reindorf, History, p. 158; Claridge Vol. I p. 274, Ward, History p. 159.

5. CCC Daybooks, entries 1 & 11 September; 24 & 29 December 1815, T 70/1107.

Kofi Asante of Abuakwa and Kwao Safrotwie of Akuapem joined Kwadwo Kuma in resorting to the tactics of guerrilla warfare used by Atta Owusu. The Akyem rulers abandoned their Kingdoms and retreated first into Akuapem with whose army they made a stand against the Asante army, under the command of Amankwa Abunyiwa,<sup>1</sup> at Adweso (?Adawso). The battle may have taken place in or about September 1815.<sup>2</sup> Opinion is divided on its outcome. One is that the allies lost the battle;<sup>3</sup> the other makes the contest indecisive.<sup>4</sup> The second view seems to be nearer the truth, considering that after the battle the Agona and the Fante invited the rebels to come and join them for a concerted action against Asante.<sup>5</sup> The invitation implies Agona and Fante recognition of the Akyem army under Kuma as a powerful fighting force. Moreover the severity of the Adweso battle and the retreat of the rebels into Fante forced Amankwa Abunyiwa to rest his army in the Ga district for about three months before feeling confident enough to resume pursuit of the Akyem and Akuapem armies.<sup>6</sup> Kuma, Kofi Asante and Safrotwie proved so elusive that the Leg-breaker went as far as Cape Coast in

- 
1. Abunyiwa is a strong name meaning The Leg-Breaker.
  2. J. Hoern (Accra) to de Veer<sup>A</sup> (EC), cited in EC Journal entry, 30 September 1815, WIC, 124<sup>A</sup>.
  3. Reindorf, History, p. 158; Claridge, Vol. I p. 274.
  4. Ward, History, p. 159.
  5. Hope Smith (CCC) to CAM, 26 May 1817, T70/40. Reindorf (History p. 158) says the rebels went to Fante to seek asylum.
  6. Flindt (CCo) to Copenhagen, 30 October 1816, Guineiske Journaler (GJ).

March 1816 without meeting with them.<sup>1</sup>

At this juncture treachery and ill-luck afflicted the Akyem-Akuapem cause. Some of the Kotoku chiefs, such as one Amoako,<sup>2</sup> began to feel weary of war and deserted Kwadwo Kuma. These appear to have colluded with the Fante to betray Kuma's movements.<sup>3</sup> The Fante betrayal would seem to have been the result of the rigorous intimidation the Leg-breaker subjected them to. He seized three prominent Fante chiefs and was determined to send them to Asante as prisoners-of-war if the Fante did not disclose the whereabouts of the two Akyem rebel rulers and Kwao Safrotwie. But for British and Dutch intercession the Asante war leader would have executed the threat.<sup>4</sup> The Fante had to pay one hundred ounces of gold to get the release of their chiefs.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore likely that they gave the Asante army a clue to the movements of Kwadwo Kuma and his colleagues. He tried to beat the treachery by taking to flight. But he was "pursued so closely [by the Asante army] that he put an end to his own existence rather than fall into the hands of his enemies."<sup>6</sup> The Asante, however, succeeded in getting

- 
1. Van Neck's Report on Asante-Fante-Anglo-Dutch Meeting held at Cape Coast Castle, 25 March 1816, NBKG 349; Acting Governor Dawson (CCC) to CAM, 26 March & 21 April 1816, T70/36.
  2. He was later made Regent of Kotoku by the Asantehene. Cf. p. 184 below.
  3. Reindorf, History, p. 160.
  4. Van Neck's Report.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Dawson (CCC) to CAM, ?June 1816, T70/36.

his dead body and took off the head as a war trophy. Kuma's fall was received with jubilation in Kumasi.<sup>1</sup>

Kuma's defeat and death in 1816, like the demise of Atta Owusu in 1811, deflated the Akyem and Akuapem struggle for independence. Some members of the Akuapem ruling house betrayed Kwao to the Asante who killed him.<sup>2</sup> Akuapem submitted in or about November 1816.<sup>3</sup> Abuakwa also lost heart; and tendered its submission in the same month of November 1816. A fine of one hundred ounces of gold was imposed on Abuakwa.<sup>4</sup> It would seem that Abuakwahene Kofi Asante and possibly some of his close male relatives, were executed in spite of the fine.<sup>5</sup> In terms of punishment Kotoku received the harshest treatment. Almost all chiefs who had supported Kwadwo Kuma up to the time of his fall, according to Reindorf, were executed. Only chiefs like Amoako, who had deserted Kuma in the last days of the rebellion, were pardoned and spared their lives. Reindorf goes on to say that the Kotoku prince, Afrifa Akwada, son of chief Amoako, his mother and his sister would have been

- 
1. Huydecoper (Kumasi) to Governor-General Daendels (EC), 7 June 1816, NBKG 369.
  2. Anonymous, Akuapem Ne Eho Amansem anase Abasem (?Akropon 1913) pp. 39-40; Kwamena-Poh, Government and Politics, p. 89 Abunyiwa imposed a fine of 400 slaves on Akuapem. Cf. several reports by Roelessen (Accra) to EC, in NBKG 501; cf. also Reindorf, op. cit., pp. 159-160.
  3. Roelessen (Accra) to Daendels (EC), 6 November 1816, NBKG 501.
  4. Roelessen (Accra) to Daendels (EC), 6 November 1816, NBKG 501.
  5. For by 1817 Queen Dokua had been enstooled as Abuakwahene, an indication that there were no male heirs to the Stool. Cf. p. 184 below.

executed had not his father paid a fine of three preguans of gold. Finally a fine of three hundred preguans was imposed on the entire state. The gravity of the punishment for Kotoku clearly proves the importance of Kuma's role in the Akyem liberation movement.

Political life in post-1816 Akyem received serious interference from Asante. The Kotoku for example were not allowed to choose a successor to Kwadwo Kuma. Instead the despicable Amoako was imposed on them as governor.<sup>1</sup> Abuakwa was not touched, apparently because of the accession of a woman to the paramount stool. The execution of Kofi Asante, and possibly other male members of the royal house, had deprived the Abuakwa of matured male heirs to the stool. Consequently Queen Dokuwa was enstooled as the new Abuakwahene,<sup>2</sup> perhaps in 1817. With a woman on the Kyebi stool, Kumasi may have felt there was less danger, if any, from Abuakwa.

The Abuakwa-Kotoku submission was complete. In 1818 they loyally discharged their vassal obligation by fighting for Asante against Gyaman.<sup>3</sup> But they also suffered much. For example the Abuakwa, like the small lacustrine state of Bosome in southern Asante, sustained heavy losses in men during the Gyaman war.<sup>4</sup> The Akyem states must have

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 160.

2. In reference to Dokuwa the term 'Abuakwahene' will be used because among the Akan the woman who ascended a 'male' stool was addressed as if she were a man.

3. AAT: Kukurantumi (1925/6).

4. Ibid. The losses of Asante Bosome who also fought for Asante in the Gyaman war were such that they felt Asante was indirectly exterminating them as a state. Cf. Ward, History p. 142 n. 15.

suffered in other ways, such as in the matter of tributes and taxes prescribed by Asante. In this respect Asante had, by 1822, decreed that only gold and European manufactured goods, and not slaves, would be acceptable.<sup>1</sup> Until then gold and slaves were the normal forms by which vassal states met their tax and tribute commitments to Asante. The Akyem must have been unhappy about the change because the gold mining industry does not appear to have been a profitable concern during the 1820s.<sup>2</sup>

Nor were they enthusiastic about the Asante yoke in general. From about 1820 there was a new but initially suppressed wave of Abuakwa hostility against Asante. By <sup>had been on the Abuakwa</sup> then Dokuwa/stool for three years. Asante provincial law required that she should now pay an official visit to Kumasi in order to swear the formal oath of allegiance to the Asantehene. But up to 1823 she had not done so. It would appear that her subjects had started questioning the wisdom and necessity of continued Abuakwa subservience to Asante, because by August 1823 Dokuwa had allied with the British who, assisted by the Danes, were already vigorously engaged in a campaign for local allies against Asante<sup>3</sup>. Earlier in the year, however, she had decided to stand by Asante, and, to leave the latter in no doubt as to where her loyalty lay, resolved to go to Kumasi in order to perform the oath of allegiance ceremony. She was at the

---

1. Major Chisholm (CCC) to Sir Charles MacCarthy, Sierra Leone (SL) 30 September 1822, CO.267/56, reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents, pp. 77-80.

2. Dupuis, A Residence, Part II p. viii.

3. See pp. 186-7 below.

point of leaving for Asante when messengers from the British and the Danes arrived in Abuakwa to solicit her support against Asante.<sup>1</sup>

The European request to the woman Abuakwahene was dictated by deteriorating Anglo-Asante relations. Asante suzerainty over Fante was the fundamental cause of its strained relations with the British. A British mission to Asante in 1817 had recognized both Asante and the British as exercising over-rule on the Fante.<sup>2</sup> The unsuitability of such an arrangement was underlined in the late 1818 and early 1819 period when Asante, in connection with its war with Gyaman in 1818, tried to levy apeatoo (war tax) in Komenda and met with Fante opposition to the tax and a subsequent misunderstanding with the British over the same issue, as Asante was inclined to hold the British immediately responsible for the Komenda conduct. Consequently in 1820 when Dupuis went to Asante as the official representative of the British Home Government, he tried to simplify matters by conceding that the Asantehene was the sole overlord of the Fante. But Hope Smith, head of the British mercantile administration at Cape Coast Castle, refused to endorse Dupuis's decision.<sup>3</sup> As a result up to 1821 when the British crown took over the administration of British possessions in West Africa from the Committee of African Merchants, Anglo-Asante relations were very much strained.

---

1. Cf. pp. 187 below.

2. Bowdich, A Mission, Chapters II-VI.

3. Dupuis, A Residence, Chapter III. Dupuis arrived in the Gold Coast in 1819 and visited Asante in early 1820.

The situation worsened as from 1822 when Governor Charles MacCarthy arrived in the Gold Coast, from Sierra Leone, to take over the administration from the merchants. He at once adopted a hostile attitude towards Asante. Asante retaliated with the execution, in March 1823, of an African sergeant in British employ at Fort Williams at Anomabo,<sup>1</sup> and a successful but a limited armed confrontation with the British at Dunkwa. Governor MacCarthy then began preparations for a full scale war with Asante. Hence the campaign for local allies against Asante.

The British spent the rest of 1823 canvassing for allies from amongst the southern states, using diplomacy, bribes, and sometimes intimidation to get them.<sup>2</sup> Dokuwa of Akyem Abuakwa was one of the local potentates whom the British approached,<sup>3</sup> perhaps some time between March and July 1823. This may have been about the time when Dokuwa was at the point of leaving for Kumasi for the oath of allegiance ceremony. If so it is reasonable to imagine her returning an unfavourable answer to the British appeal.<sup>4</sup>

But at this point the muted divided opinion of her subjects over the question of the continued Abuakwa subordination to Asante tilted the balance in favour of an alliance with the British. While some favoured the relationship, others were opposed to it, and would not allow Dokuwa to go to Kumasi. The pro-Asante party consisted

1. Reindorf, History, p. 173; Metcalfe, Documents, p. 83 col.2.

2. Metcalfe, Maclean, p. 41.

3. Reindorf, History, p. 175.

4. Ibid., p. 176.



mainly of Divisional chiefs like the Nifahene, alias the Asiakwahene, and the Gyasehene, otherwise known as the Kwabenhene.<sup>1</sup> The preponderance of the anti-Asantists was made up of lesser chiefs, the most vociferous of whom were Okru of Apapam, Oben Ayekwa of Apedwa, and Kwasi Asimen of Tete.<sup>2</sup> A civil war ensued over the issue and the anti-Asante party won.<sup>3</sup>

The effects of the outcome of the Abuakwa civil war were tremendous for both the Abuakwa themselves and the Gold Coast in general. It may well be that it was from about this time that the three chiefs of Apapam, Apedwa, and Tete were constituted into the Amantoo-Mmiensa Council, or the Council of the Three Counties, as Danquah called it, and recognized as the Fourth Estate in the Akyem Abuakwa constitution.<sup>4</sup> For these three chiefs came to be regarded as the custodians of the Okusukrunku stool<sup>5</sup> and the protectors not only of its occupant but also the interest of the Abuakwa kingdom as a whole.<sup>6</sup> The civil war had thus promoted a constitutional development in Abuakwa. This outcome needs to be emphasized because the Amantoo-Mmiensa Council is the only aspect which makes the Abuakwa

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 175; AAT: Kwaben (1925/6).

2. Ibid., p. 175.

3. Ibid., p. 175, AAT: Pamen (1925/6).

4. Danquah, Akan Law, p. 11. In this work Danquah fully discusses the Abuakwa constitution. The present author accepts his description, analysis and conclusions. See Appendix A, pp. 363-374 below.

5. i.e. The Abuakwa paramount stool.

6. Danquah, Akan Law, pp. 11f.

constitution different from those of the other two Akyem states.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the anti-Asantists in the civil war of course meant Abuakwa renunciation of its subjection to Asante. The internal conflict thus ushered in a third, and what was to turn out to be the last, phase of the Akyem struggle to free itself from the Asante yoke. This stage in the struggle may conveniently be christened the Dokuwa phase.<sup>2</sup> Were the Kumasi Court not obsessed by the strained relations with the British, they would have immediately despatched a punitive armed expedition to Abuakwa.

In terms of the Gold Coast as a whole, perhaps the most significant effect of the Abuakwa civil war was its generation, in the Abuakwa, of a more favourable disposition towards the alliance suggested by the British. In or about August 1823, Dokuwa arrived in Accra to announce Abuakwa membership of the Southern Alliance which had already emerged.<sup>3</sup> Anglo-Danish diplomatic pressure had, no doubt, influenced the Abuakwa decision, but Abuakwa anticipation of a possible attack by Asante seems to have been another and perhaps a greater contributory factor. Abuakwa membership in such an alliance would ensure them of brighter

1. The other three Estates were the State (Okyeman) Council, the Sovereign-Executive (the Abuakwahene), and the Kyebi Council. This Council was made up of lesser office-holders and elders who were normally resident in Kyebi and could therefore easily make themselves available to advise the Abuakwahene. Cf. Appendix A pp. 363-374 below.
2. The first two phases occurred in 1810-11 and 1812-16. Cf. pp. 167-184 above.
3. Reindorf, History, p. 176.

prospects of success if Asante attacked.

Asante war strategists took the developments in Abuakwa into serious consideration. By January 1824 Asante had taken the field against the British, the Wassa and the Denkyera in the western sector of the Gold Coast, defeating them all and decapitating Governor MacCarthy in the battle of Nsamankow. Meanwhile the Asante sent another and a much smaller army, under the command of one Kwaku Bri or Bribi,<sup>1</sup> to punish the Akyem Abuakwa. It is most probable that, on grounds of vassal obligation, the Akyem Kotoku, who were still loyal to Asante, were expected to join Kwaku Bri's force.

They, however, appear to have played a double game to tilt the balance in favour of Akyem Abuakwa. Probably it was they, at any rate a section of them, who sent secret information to the Akyem Abuakwa about the impending Asante attack on them, because while Kwaku Bri was in Kotoku, Dokuwa sent to solicit military support from her kinsmen Addo Dankwa, the Okuapemhene.<sup>2</sup> The Akuapem responded favourably and immediately too. Again the Kotoku seem to have rendered the Abuakwa another good secret service by revealing to them the movements of the Asante army under Bri. This is suggested by the fact that the Abuakwa-Akuapem alliance carried the war to Bri while he was in Kotoku instead of waiting to be attacked. A stiff battle was fought near Asene in the neighbourhood of present day Asante-Akyem town of Obogu, and victory went to

---

1. Wilks (1975 p. 180) gives the name of the Asante commander as Kwaku Bene, who was the Chief of the Asante town of Atwoma-Agogo.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 190.

the allies.<sup>1</sup> The Akuapem are given greater credit for the victory. Tradition has it that the Asante force had almost defeated the allies when the Okuapemhene and his men cleverly outflanked the enemy and attacked from behind. Panic seized the Asante army who were totally routed as a result.<sup>2</sup> The battle of Asene was probably fought before August owing to the panic which it produced on the Asante army in the western sector of the Gold Coast, in that month, when news about Bri's defeat reached them.

As soon as word about Kwaku Bri's defeat reached the Asante army in the west in the month of August 1824,<sup>3</sup> some of its important leaders resolved to return home.<sup>4</sup> The resolution was judicious because the Akyem Abuakwa and the Akuapem could easily follow up their victory over the Kwaku Bri force with an attack on an unprotected Asante, from the east, if these allies were more adventurous. Indeed rumours were circulating that the Danes, led by their Governor, Richelieu, had started advancing on Asante through Akyem and that the news of the alleged Danish move forced them to return home.<sup>5</sup> This was a mere Danish threat.<sup>6</sup> However, the Abuakwa defeat of Kwaku Bri's army, together with the Danish threat, whether real or a ruse, forced the

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 190; AAT: Kukurantumi, Begoro, Asiakwa & Pamen; Ward, History, p. 221.

2. AAT: Kukurantumi (1925/5).

3. Wilks, Asante in the Nineteenth Century, p. 180.

4. Reindorf, History, p. 190.

5. Ellis (1893) p. 176.

6. Claridge, Vol. 1, pp. 375-6.

main Asante army in the west to abandon its campaign in the western sector of the Gold Coast.<sup>1</sup> The success of the Abuakwa-Akuapem alliance in the east thus saved the British and their allies in the west from a possible greater disaster. Part of the credit must, however, be given to the Kotoku. Their secret messages to the Akyem Abuakwa went a long way to contribute to the success of the Abuakwa and the Akuapem over the Bri force.

For their role they undoubtedly anticipated an attack from Asante. They seem to have calculated that the best way to avoid such an eventuality was to desert northern Akyem and put distance between them and Asante. There could not have been a much better place to go than Akyem south of the Birem, into the heart of Akyem Abuakwa. Here they would be sure not only of Abuakwa allied support but also that of the rest of the Southern Alliance. Amoako who was still the Regent of Kotoku, refused to be party to the emigration. Together with a small following he left Dampon, the Kotoku capital, and went to the Agogo, who, though in northern Akyem, seem to have supported Asante. His son, Prince Afrifa of the Kotoku royal house, then assumed the leadership of the Kotoku emigration to Akyem Abuakwa. The

---

1. Wilks (*Asante*, p. 180), however, thinks that the outbreak of disease among the Asante army and the rains also forced them to abandon the western campaign.

migration is said to have taken place in 1825.<sup>1</sup> Abuakwa's success had still wider consequences. This was about the time when the ruling lineage of lacustrine Bosome also migrated southwards to join their kinsmen in Western Akyem. The remote cause of their migration was tension with Kumasi. They had distinguished themselves in the 1818-1819 war in which they had fought for Asante against Gyaman.<sup>2</sup> They lost many men in the war but the large booty which they gained compensated for these losses. The booty, however, became a bone of contention between Koragye Ampaw, their King, and the Asante Court, as the latter demanded its surrender. To end it all Koragye and his people migrated to western Akyem.<sup>3</sup> It is reasonable to imagine the nineteenth century Bosome migration taking place in the 1824-5 period, when many of their neighbours, including Kotoku, Denkyera, Wassa and the two Assin states of Apemanim and Atanoso, all migrated southwards, in response to either the 1824 Abuakwa success against Asante or the campaign which the British launched during that period for local allies in a projected campaign against Asante. For Reindorf suggests that there was a degree of co-ordination

---

1. G-J. (1840-1844): entries No. 329 dated 18 December 1842 and No. 367 dated 10 February 1843; Simon Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 1 March 1859, BMA-PJC; "Petition of Quabina Fuah, King of Inswaromoon [Nsuaem or Oda today]", to the Governor (CCC), 17 July 1871, CO. 96/88; Dr. Gouldsbury's Report, 29 June 1874, CO.96/112; "Precis of Akim claims to Ashanti-Akim: Kotoku MP. 212/93, MP.5718/94, Confidential MP. 105/96, MP. 559/96, MP. 694/96, MP. 8661/97, MP. 4964/98, MP. 1588/00, MP. 1209/01; Colonial Secretary (Accra) to Chief Commissioner (Ashanti), 2 June 1908, all in File No. D.46 (Kumasi Archives); Governor Hodgson (Accra) to Chamberlain (CO), 17 July 1900, CO.96/361; Colonel Willecocks (Fumso, Ashanti) to Chamberlain, 4 July 1900, CO.96/374.

2. Ward, History, p. 169.

3. ABT: Soaduro (1968/9); Ward, History, p. 220; D. Afua Sutherland, State Emblems of the Gold Coast (1954) p. 15; Wilks, in JAH Vol. IX (1968) p. 163.

between some of the migrating ruling lineages, for example between Kotoku and Denkyera.<sup>1</sup>

Socially as well as politically the movement to the south proved quite useful to the Akyem in particular and the other southern states, the British and the Danes, in general. Immediately, the movement led to family reunions among the Bosome and the Kotoku. A split had occurred among the Bosome in 1706 when a section of the ruling lineage and the people, led by Ntow Kroko, migrated to western Akyem.<sup>2</sup> The 1824-5 migration seems to have brought about a re-unification of the two sides in Western Akyem. The re-union made it possible for Bosome to exercise a considerable influence on Akyem affairs as from about this time.

The 1824-5 Bosome migration to western Akyem prepared the ground for another family re-unification, this time among the Kotoku. Joining in the Bosome migration were the relatives of Kwakye, the fugitive ex-Kotokuhene who had fled his kingdom for Asante in 1812.<sup>3</sup> One of these relatives was his nephew, Kofi Agyeman. Both the Kotoku and Bosome migrants had scarcely settled when Afrifa, the Kotokuhene, died in eastern Akyem (Abuakwa) through accident, killed by a falling tree. His subjects quickly sent to recall Agyeman from the Bosome Court at Soaduro, and enstooled him at Gyadam as the new Kotokuhene.<sup>4</sup> Thus while

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 192.

2. Cf. Chapter 2pp. 43-44 above.

3. See p. 179 above.

4. Reindorf, History, pp. 192-3.

the migrations to the south had led to family re-unions among the Bosome and the Kotoku, it was also forging closer contact between the three states in Akyem.<sup>1</sup>

The Kotoku and the Bosome were not now expected to move without Asante putting up a fight to prevent them from having their way. Nor were the Abuakwa expected to escape punishment for defeating the Asante army under Kwaku Bri and killing the commander himself.<sup>2</sup> The three Akyem states must have realised that sooner than later they would have to face a punitive armed expedition from Asante. Only the death of the great Osei Bonsu, which seems to have occurred in November 1823<sup>3</sup> but perhaps kept secret till after the Battle of Nsamankow in 1824, apparently prevented Asante from taking the field at once against the Akyem. There was thus every reason for the Akyem to prepare for further war with Asante. This realisation must have made them more anxious than reluctant<sup>4</sup> to seek alliance with the British who had an axe to grind against Asante in the defeat and death of Sir Charles MacCarthy. Obviously it was due to the importance they attached to such an alliance that the woman Abuakwahene, Dokuwa, and the new Kotokuhene Agyeman, reaffirmed their membership of the alliance and gave up hostages to back their loyalty to it.<sup>5</sup> Almost all states

---

1. The effect of this new development is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 below.

2. Cf. pp. 190-1 above.

3. Wilks, I., Asante in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 174.

4. Reindorf, History, p. 176.

5. Ibid.



south of Asante, as well as the Danes, joined<sup>1</sup> the British promoted alliance.

The Asante army took the field in early 1826. It has been suggested that one aim was to punish the Ga for deserting their friendship with Asante.<sup>2</sup> This may well be true: not only did the Ga renounce the Asante alliance but between 1823 and 1824 in response to the British propaganda, they seized, robbed and killed many Asante subjects they could catch in the Ga district and elsewhere. However, an additional and perhaps a weightier objective of Asante was to punish the Akyem and return them to allegiance with Kumasi. Besides, the Asante army could not get to Ga without first fighting the Akyem, unless of course they directed their course via trans-Volta Akwamu.

The Akyem forces had several skirmishes with the invader and seem to have suffered as many reverses.<sup>3</sup> They were therefore compelled to retreat southwards into Akuapem, en route to join forces with other members of the Southern Alliance.

The Allies met Asante forces at Akantamasu in August 1826, and won the battle which ensued. The Akyem are said to have later inflicted further but minor defeats on the already battered Asante army.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Of the Southern states only Kwawu remained loyal to Asante. The Dutch remained loyal to their friendship with Asante.
  2. Cruickshank, Vol. I p. 161; Reindorf, History p. 193; Claridge, Vol. I p. 385; Ward, History, p. 183.
  3. Reindorf, History, pp. 198-9.
  4. Ibid., pp. 208-9.

After the Battle of Akantamasu the British, on their own behalf and that of the other members of the Alliance, made protracted efforts to effect a peace settlement with Asante. But it was not until November 1831 that this was finally achieved. The delay in reaching the peace settlement was due mainly to the opposition of the African members of the Alliance to the British efforts. Foremost among the opponents were the Akyem. In terms of ethnic affinity, geography, and culture, of all the various Akan groups, the Akyem peoples were perhaps the closest to the Asante, and yet the most hostile to them.<sup>1</sup> On that account they did not favour peace with Asante,<sup>2</sup> without an opportunity to obtain a revenge for the past ills they had suffered from Asante. They refused to assent to the peace treaty unless certain Asante prisoners-of-war, including Akyaa,<sup>3</sup> daughter of the Asantehene, were given up to them. On the other hand the Asante negotiators at the peace conference showed considerable contempt for the Akyem as erstwhile vassals to Asante.<sup>4</sup> The attitudes of the two peoples generated such serious disturbances during the signing of the treaty that, according to Reindorf, it required all the tact and temper of "Governor Maclean to maintain peace."<sup>5</sup>

---

1. C. S. Salmon (CCC) to Kennedy (SL), 3 October 1871, CO.96/89.

2. Metcalfe, Maclean, pp. 93-4.

3. The name occurs as Akyianwa in the records etc.

4. Metcalfe, Maclean, pp. 93-4.

5. Reindorf, History, p. 251.

By virtue of the Peace Treaty of 1831 the Akyem states, and all others who had joined the British-promoted Southern Alliance, recovered their independence from Asante.<sup>1</sup>

For the Akyem this was a consummation of a cherished and old desire dating back to at least 1783. In that year Abuakwa reluctantly accepted vassalage to Asante, following the example of Kotoku in 1742. They were obliged to continue to be subservient to Asante for lack of dynamic leadership. But in 1807 when Atta Owusu ascended the Abuakwa stool and in 1812 when Kwadwo Kuma mounted that of Kotoku, it was evident that the Akyem would one day sever the servitude to Asante. This they achieved finally in 1831.

---

1. Cf. Clause 3 of the Treaty, reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents Nos. 83 and 98.

## CHAPTER 6

### AKYEM, ASANTE, THE BRITISH, AND THE DANES

1832-1850

The pre-1831 upheavals had far reaching effects on the subsequent history of Akyem. The ruling lineages of Kotoku, a section of lacustrine Bosome, and their subjects had fled their homes, in northern Akyem and Asante respectively, to Akyem south of the Birem in order to escape from Asante domination.<sup>1</sup> But the 1831 Treaty of Peace which endorsed the recovery of independence by these states omitted to stipulate as to whether the Bosome and Kotoku could or could not return to their ancestral homes without let or hindrance from Asante. They themselves resolved the issue by opting to stay on in Akyem south of the Birem. The decision, coupled with the arrival in 1832 of the Juaben, as refugees from Asante, turned Akyem south of Birem into a haven for fugitive Chiefs. Preponderant European participation in the pre-1831 events and European economic interests also subsequently made Akyem a source of Anglo-Danish rivalry for the district as a sphere of influence. All these influenced intra-Akyem relations as well as relations with neighbours and the European traders on the coast.

At present there is no direct evidence on the motives which prompted the refugees in their decision to settle permanently south of the Birem.

---

1. Cf. Chapter 5pp. 192-4 above.

It is, however, fairly easy to speculate: continued fear of Asante was undoubtedly the main, if not the only explanation. This is suggested by the experience of the Denkyera. Prior to 1824 the Denkyera had lived in the middle reaches of the Ofin basin, but the ruling house and some of their subjects had migrated to the south in order to foster alliance with the British against Asante. In 1829, two years before the signing of the peace treaty of 1831, they refused to return to their native country and asked the British to negotiate, on their behalf, with the Fante for land on which they could settle. The result was the founding of a new Denkyera state with its capital at Jukwa, just about twelve miles to the north of Cape Coast.<sup>1</sup> Apparently the Denkyera rulers thought it was impolitic to return to their native country where they would be close neighbours once again to Asante. That would have been a prelude to a rejection of the recovery of independence, because proximity was likely to make Asante attempt to regain its pre-1831 hegemony.<sup>2</sup> Bosome (at least part of it) and Kotoku seem to have arrived at a similar decision.

With respect to Kotoku the decision adversely affected the size of the Akyem country.<sup>3</sup> Politically the refusal to return to their ancestral home rendered northern Akyem a no-man's-land in the 1830s and 1840s. And by the 1850s the district was regarded by the British protecting

---

1. Metcalfe, Macleane, p. 127.

2. As late as 1853 Asante tried this in relation to Assin.

3. See Map 6.

power as forming part of Asante<sup>1</sup> even though the Kotoku continued to regard it as belonging to them.<sup>2</sup>

Though reduced in size, the Akyem district became varied in its population pattern and township distribution. The arrival of the immigrants from lacustrine Bosome naturally increased the population of Akyem Bosome and also Akyem as a whole, though by how much it is difficult to say. Bosome tradition suggests that Soaduro was founded by the nineteenth century migrants. With the eighteenth century migrants already settled in western Akyem,<sup>3</sup> it is more reasonable to imagine the later migrants joining the earlier ones. The two sections may have then decided to found a new capital.

Changes also occurred in the population pattern of eastern Akyem. Before the arrival of the Kotoku ruling lineage, the Abuakwa had been the sole inhabitants of the district. The Kotoku refugees of course increased the population of the district, though the numerical strength of the Kotoku migrants is not known. Besides, the two Akyem elements became considerably mixed up, in terms of location. Reindorf recalls how in the 1820s Dokuwa, the

---

1. See Chapter 7, p.230 below.

2. As late as 1908 the Kotokuhene claimed to be the legitimate ruler of Asante Akyem. Cf. W.C.F..Robertson, Secretary for Native Affairs, to the Omanhene, Akyem Kotoku, ? June 1908, Case No. 1073/07, File No. D46, Kumasi Archives. See also "Precis of Akim claims to Ashanti-Akim: Akim Kotoku": MP.212/93, MP.5718/94, Conf. MP.105/96, MP.5579/96, MP.6974/96, MP.6533/97, MP.8661/97, MP.4964/98, MP.7826/98, MP.6505/99, MP.1588/00, MP.4964/00, MP.1209/01, File No. D 46.

3. Cf. Chapter 2pp.43-4 above.

woman Abuakwahene, cordially welcomed the Kotoku ruling lineage, and asked them to choose from among the Abuakwa towns of Gyadam, Adasewase, Muoso, Mampon, Odubi and Asafo as settlement places; the migrants chose Gyadam as their chief town.<sup>1</sup> Other Abuakwa towns like Muoso received some of the Kotoku element.<sup>2</sup> Such was the concentration of Kotoku element in Muoso that by the 1850s the Kotokuhene regarded it as a 'native' town.<sup>3</sup> The migrants, however, seem to have founded one or two towns on their own initiative. Among these were Asuboa, described in the 1850s as a suburb of Gyadam, and possibly Moseaso, destroyed in 1860.<sup>4</sup> On the whole the arrival and residence of the Kotoku ruling lineage in eastern Akyem in the 1830s brought a change in the political map of the district. In after years portions of it were regarded as 'native' Kotoku territory.

During the immediately following years, however, the Kotoku presence in eastern Akyem destroyed the pre-1825 good relations between them and Abuakwa. The Abuakwa were inclined to blame Kotokuhene Agyeman for the deterioration, but the fundamental cause would seem to have been familiarity which bred mutual contempt for each other. In or about 1825, the Kotoku 'refugees' chose Kofi Agyeman as Kotokuhene.<sup>5</sup> "A

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 192.

2. AAT: Muoso (1968/9).

3. See Chapter 7 pp. 235-7 below.

4. Ibid.

5. Cf. Chapter 5 p. 194 above.

better selection," Reindorf comments, "could not have been made, but [the choice] offended [Abuakwahene] Dokuwa not personally, but on account of his late uncle's conduct towards the royal family of Kotoku."<sup>1</sup> The dislike of the Kyebi Court for Agyeman persisted in the 1830s and 1840s, and led to the straining of relations between the Kotoku and their Abuakwa hosts. The details of the tension are not known for certain. But the certainty of the conflict is not in doubt. It was strong enough to make Andreas Riis notice it in 1839 when he visited eastern Akyem.<sup>2</sup> At some stage in Dokua's reign, which ended in 1842, such was Abuakwa hostility towards Agyeman that he sought safety with the Danes at the Christiansborg castle, Osu.<sup>3</sup> Reindorf therefore may well be right in asserting that in the 1830s Abuakwa and Kotoku would have gone to war but for Juaben mediation.<sup>4</sup>

The intervention was made possible by the presence of the Juaben in eastern Akyem as refugees, and guests of the Abuakwa. A civil war in Asante was the immediate cause of the Juaben flight to eastern Akyem (Abuakwa). Since the creation of the Asante union or confederation in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, there had always been a muted rivalry between the

- 
1. Reindorf, History, pp. 192-3. For the conduct in question see Chapter 5, p. 178 above.
  2. EMM. 1840, Part I p. 96f, cited by M. Johnson, Migrants, Part I p. 16. Cf. p. 213 below for the identity of Riis.
  3. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 206.
  4. Reindorf, History, pp. 293-4. For a detailed account of the effect of the tension in the 1840s and 1850s see Chapter 7 below.



states of Kumasi and Juaben.<sup>1</sup> The rivalry intensified after the defeat of Asante in 1826 and steadily developed into an open war in June-July 1832 when Kumasi forces invaded and defeated the Juaben. The latter, led by their Chief, Kwasi Boaten, in July 1832, fled to eastern Akyem to seek asylum with the Akyem Abuakwa Court.

The choice of Eastern Akyem (Abuakwa) as a place of asylum was well calculated. Kyebi was already playing host to the Kotoku ruling lineage and some of their followers.<sup>2</sup> The Abuakwa were likely to, as they actually did, welcome the Juaben fugitives also. In the 1830s Abuakwa as a place of safety seems to have become proverbial: for besides the Kotoku and the Juaben, a Fante chief and his subjects also fled to Kyebi for protection.<sup>3</sup> In relation to the fugitives Dokuwa, the woman Abuakwahene, was like a hen to her brood. Her feelings as a mother may have partly inspired the Abuakwa reception of politically and militarily hard-pressed neighbours. With respect to the Juaben presence in Abuakwa, however, another aim was the possibility of the Juaben striking an alliance with the Akyem states against Kumasi. The Akyem in general had been most opposed to a peace settlement with Asante in 1831 without wreaking vengeance of a sort on Kumasi.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Akyem seem to have had

---

1. Juaben Tradition, as recorded by Rattray, Ashanti Law, pp. 127 & 169; Bowdich, A Mission, p. 279; Dupuis, A Residence, p. 138, Cruickshank, Vol. I p. 50; Ward, History, p. 207; Metcalfe, Maclean, pp. 124-5.

2. Cf. pp. 192-3 above.

3. EMM, 1840 Part III, cited by M. Johnson, Migrants p. 15. The identity of the Fante chief is not disclosed by the records.

4. See Chapter 5 p. 197 above.

a soft place in their hearts for the Juaben even though Asante, as a whole, was hated by them. In or about 1812 the Kotoku, for example, singled out Juaben, from amongst the confederate Asante states, as a friend.<sup>1</sup>

Abuakwa justified itself as a place of asylum. Dokuwa cordially welcomed Boaten and his subjects to Kyebi where they lived for some time. Later she allowed them to establish Saman, near Osino, about ten miles to the north of Kyebi, as their chief town. Owing to easy communication between Eastern Akyem and the coastal Ga district, some merchants in Accra were able to send the Juaben fugitives messages of sympathy and material relief.<sup>2</sup> Neighbours of the Akyem were equally sympathetic with the refugees from Juaben. Even before the final outcome of the Juaben-Kumasi war was known in the south, the Assin for instance had begun seizing Kumasi traders they could lay hands on in support of Juaben.<sup>3</sup> The Denkyera sent a message to Abuakwa assuring the Juaben of Denkyera support should Kumasi dare to attack them in Akyem.<sup>4</sup> It would seem that only the fear of the whites on the coast prevented all the Akyem and many of the other states from offering immediate military assistance to the Juaben refugees.<sup>5</sup> Even then the Akyem participated in

---

1. See Chapter 5 p. 179 above.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 284.

3. Maclean (CCC) to Dutch Governor-General van Legen (EC), 13 July 1832, NBKG 360.

4. Reindorf, History, p. 284.

5. Metcalfe, Maclean p. 125.

the predatory activities of the Juaben, such as disrupting Kumasi lines of communication with the coast.<sup>1</sup> They also took part in an armed expedition which the Juaben refugees organized against parts of provincial Asante such as Krakye and Namonsi in 1833.<sup>2</sup>

Increased European authority over them was the price which the Akyem ultimately paid for supporting Juaben hostility against Kumasi. In deciding to encourage the Juaben, the Akyem, it would seem, did not take into serious consideration the possibility of Anglo-Danish intervention. To promote the flow of trade between the forts and the forest had been the major, if not the sole, aim of the British mercantile administration at Cape Coast Castle in meticulously guiding the process which led to the signing of the peace treaty of 1831 between the Southern Alliance and Asante. This administration, headed by Maclean, the chief architect of the treaty, just could not countenance any activity likely to disturb trade. Apart from disturbing trade, the Akyem-Juaben blockade of the trade routes and seizure of Asante traders could lead to an Asante invasion of Akyem. Such an invasion would involve not only the Akyem but also other southern states, the British and the Danes, in short, "the entire British alliance ..... by virtue of the Queen [Dokua of Abuakwa], being a member of the alliance, whose independence was safely guarded by the 1831 Treaty."<sup>3</sup> Should another 'Asante' war break out, trade,

---

1. Minutes of Council Meeting (CCC), 27 August 1832, CO.98/1A; Maclean to Van Legen (EC), 28 September 1832, NBKG 360.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 285.

3. Maclean to CAM, 27 August 1832, CO.267/117.

to the thinking of the British, would be the greatest loser. It has been argued that the violation of the 1831 Treaty and the consequential political implications of such a violation more than anything else obliged Maclean to intervene in Akyem affairs during the Juaben sojourn.<sup>1</sup> The loss of trade opportunities and profits was another and no doubt a greater concern of Maclean.

By virtue of the Treaty of 1831 the British could intervene in Akyem affairs. Clause 5 of the treaty empowered British mediation between any of the southern states and Asante in the event of strained relations.<sup>2</sup> By actively encouraging Juaben hostility against Kumasi the Akyem states committed aggression against Asante. The British could therefore intervene.

Maclean threatened the Juaben refugees, and of course the Akyem, with a joint Anglo-Danish-Dutch punitive expedition if they did not put a stop to their predatory activities, release all Asante subjects they were holding in detention, and submit the dispute with Kumasi to European arbitration. Maclean's next step was that he and the Danish authority each stationed a platoon of six troops at Kyebi to watch the movements of the Akyem and the Juaben refugees. He also sent a force to clear Akyem and Juaben

---

1. Metcalfe, Maclean, p. 125.

2. The Clause stipulated: "To prevent as much as possible future war, it is agreed that in case of the parties subscribing to these articles [of the Treaty] committing an act of aggression and complaint being made thereof to the Governor-in-Chief of his Britannic Majesty's possessions on the coast .... any satisfaction which the circumstances of the case may require, will be adjudged to the aggrieved party by the said Governor-in-Chief ....."

marauders from the trade routes, especially the Assin section of the Kumasi-Cape Coast route.<sup>1</sup> Basically these measures were merely intimidatory but they had the desired effect: by September 1832 the Juaben had agreed in principle to the idea of European arbitration as a means of settling the conflict with Kumasi.

The quick Juaben submission to the British authority must be seen as also reflecting Akyem acceptance of that fiat. The rate at which the submission was made seems surprising, considering that at their distance, the Akyem and the Juaben refugees could have easily defied the authority of the Europeans and the latter would have found it relatively difficult in taking military reprisal against them. With respect to the Akyem three things may have dictated the pace of submission. The presence of uniformed troops in Kyebi was a novelty which Akyem leaders probably felt was a pointer to sterner measures the Castle authorities in general and the British in particular were capable of taking against whoever tried to displease them. After four hundred years of commercial association, the Akyem, like many other Gold Coast peoples, had acquired an insatiable taste for European imports which they had come to regard as necessary. For any state or people to refuse to submit to the wishes of the European mercantile presence on the coast was a certain way to invite European economic blockade. The share of the Akyem in the coast trade in the 1830s must have been considerable.<sup>2</sup> They and the Juaben who briskly

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 287; Metcalfe, Maclean, pp. 125-6.

2. Akyem economy during the 1830s and 1840s is discussed on pp.218-220 below.

participated in this trade, could not afford to risk a loss of their share. But perhaps the greatest fear of the Akyem was the possibility of being expelled from the southern alliance to face Asante alone. For Clause 6 of the 1831 Treaty of Peace stipulated: "If any of the allied Kings and chiefs shall be the aggressor or aggressors against Asante .... and if such aggressor or aggressors shall refuse to abide by the decision of the Governor of Cape Coast Castle or his representative ..... in that case he or they will no longer be considered as a confederacy, and must arrange his or their dispute as he and they best can." The Akyem states might want to annoy Asante in small ways but not to the extent of inviting war with Kumasi. It was still too soon after the sufferings they had experienced at the hands of Asante in the recent past. In the face of the perennial Asante bogey, the Akyem states, like other more interior southern states, were obliged to seek alliance with the militarily superior Europeans and accept their wishes, even though the acceptance compromised Akyem political independence.

The submission averted the immediate danger of invasion from Asante. But the emergence of an Anglo-Danish rivalry for spheres of influence in the Gold Coast, particularly for Akyem, Akuapem and Krobo,<sup>1</sup> prevented the process of reconciliation from immediately developing into a regular peace settlement between the two Asante groups. Consequently in 1833 Abuakwa and Kotoku assisted the Juaben to invade some

---

1. The rivalry is discussed on pp. 214-218 below.

of the trans-Volta districts of provincial Asante.<sup>1</sup> The Juaben and the Akyem supporters must have done more than that. For in the early days of 1834 Kumasi threatened to invade Akyem in retaliation.<sup>2</sup> But the death of Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto in March 1834 saved the Akyem states from war with Asante.

Relations between the Akyem and the Juaben on one side and Kumasi on the other improved as from now on, because the new Asantehene, Kwaku Dua I, was favourably disposed towards the Juaben. He worked untiringly in an effort to get the Juaben back to Asante. This enabled the Cape Coast and Christiansborg castles authorities to effect a peace settlement between Juaben and Kumasi in November 1835.<sup>3</sup> The peace treaty is worth quoting in full in view of the direct bearing it had on subsequent Akyem-Asante relations:

"Article 1st: All differences of whatever kind soever which may have existed or do now exist between the aforesaid parties are hereby declared to be at an end, and shall not be revived by either party.

Article 2nd: Boatyn and his people, or any portion of men, shall be, from this time forth, at perfect liberty to return to their former country of Djuabin without let, hindrance or molestation from the King of Ashantee or his people.

---

1. Reindorf, History, p. 285.

2. EC Journal, entry, 9 February 1834, Furley Collection.

3. Treaty of Peace between Asante and Juaben, dated Accra, 16th November 1835, CO.267/136. Reindorf is thus wrong in dating the peace settlement to May 1835, unless of course actual agreement took place in May while the formal signing of the treaty waited till November.

Article 3rd: The subjects of Boatyn or Boatyn himself, if so inclined, shall be at perfect liberty to visit any part of Ashantee without being subject to molestation on account of past differences and quarrels, and in like manner, Ashantees shall be at perfect liberty to visit any part of Djuabin or Akim without being subject to any molestation or insult.

Article 4th: In order to guarantee this Treaty of Peace, and to ensure to both parties the most perfect security for their persons and property, the Governments of Cape Coast, Elmina, and Christiansborg do hereby declare that they will look upon as enemies and treat as such either party infringing the Treaty."

Akyem leaders probably expected that the Juaben would return to Asante immediately after the November peace settlement. But the Juaben stayed on till about 1841 when they finally left for home.

For the Akyem, the delay in the departure was uncalled for, because with the passage of time the initial enthusiasm with which they had welcomed the Juaben refugees was fast waning, giving way to gradually but steadily increasing tension between the host and the guest. Scuffles occasionally broke out between the people of Kyebi and the refugees; Abuakwa princes, especially Atta Obiwom, the younger of the twin sons of Dokuwa, reportedly had love affairs with the wives of the Juabenhene; while the Kyebi Court occasionally accused Boaten of aiding, abetting, and shielding native Akyem criminals; and Abuakwa royals were inclined to be jealous of the Juabenhene owing to his skill

---



in the art of ruling "in the Twi manner."<sup>1</sup>

Existence of further differences with Kumasi was given in 1838 as the cause of the delay in the Juaben departure from Akyem.<sup>2</sup> Topp's assertion in May 1838 is, however, vitiated by a Dutch observation, made in April 1838, that the Juaben would leave Akyem for Asante in the dry season, that is during December 1838 and February 1839; that to hurry the departure, the Asante Court had sent the Juabenhene one hundred preguans to help him defray any debts he might have incurred in Akyem.<sup>3</sup> Neither of these two assertions can be set aside lightly. The very friendly relations still existing between the Dutch and Asante gives credibility to their assertion; while the English would certainly not make such an utterance if they were not sure of the evidence, especially in view of their anxiety to bring peace between Kumasi and Juaben.

Unwillingness to leave Akyem, on account of its excellent economic opportunities, would seem to best explain the delay in departure. The Juabenhene's trading activities

- 
1. Reindorf, History, p. 286. The phrase "in the Twi manner" is unfortunate, as it might create the impression that the Abuakwa ruling house was not Twi or Akan in origin. It could give rise to such misleading assertions as that of Dr. Ayandele that the Akyem were not Akan. Cf. his Introduction to the 1970 edition of Horton's Letters, p. 20. This is not to say that Dr. Ayandele based his assertion on Reindorf, though the possibility should not be ruled out. Perhaps Reindorf meant to say Asante and not Twi cf. pp. 213-214 below for further comment on this assertion of Reindorf.
  2. Topp & Council (CCC) to CAM, 8 May 1838, reprinted in British House of Commons Papers, cited by Metcalfe Maclean, p. 130 n.1.
  3. EC Journal, entry, 11 April 1838, quoting report from Huydecoper (Kumasi), F.C.; Reindorf, (History, p. 289) says 800 preguans was sent to Boaten.

in Akyem suggest this. Andreas Riis, a Danish missionary working for the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast, was impressed by these activities in 1839 when he visited Eastern Akyem.<sup>1</sup> The Juabenhene dealt in arms and ammunition, the sale of which was controlled in Asante. In Akyem, the Juabenhene, according to Riis, traded in these commodities without restraint.<sup>2</sup> But for the deaths of Kwasi Boaten and his brother and successor, Kofi Boaten, the Juaben would have stayed longer than 1841, when they left, led by Ama Seiwa, the mother of the deceased Chiefs.

By 1841 when they finally left, the Juaben refugees had lived in Eastern Akyem for almost ten years. The contact left lasting marks on both the hosts and the guests. Ethnic admixture was one of the effects. For there had been inter-marriages between the Akyem and the Juaben. On familial grounds some of the Akyem appear to have joined the returning Juaben to Asante; on the other hand some of the Juaben opted to stay back. It was believed in the early 1840s that about one thousand remained in the Protectorate.<sup>3</sup> It is reasonable to imagine many of these choosing to live in eastern Akyem, i.e. Akyem Abuakwa.

Exchange of political ideas would seem to have also resulted from the contact. The Akyem are said to have learned state-craft from the Juaben.<sup>4</sup> This view is open to doubt.

1. EMM 1840, Part III.

2. The Economy of Akyem is discussed on pp. 218-220 below.

3. Freeman, T.B., Journal of Two Visits to the Kingdom of Ashanti, London, 1843, pp. 156-8.

4. Reindorf, History, p. 286.

The Asante were, and still are, the best exponents of government in the Akan fashion. But even if the Akyem were not so good, they would have acquired the essentials of the "art of ruling" from Asante long before the residence of the Juaben in Eastern Akyem in the 1830s. The acquisition could have taken place during the period of vassalage.

In terms of inter-state relations perhaps the greatest effect of the contact was the cordial relations which were re-established between the Abuakwa Court and the Juaben before the latter finally left for Asante. Abuakwa leaders are said to have put the Juaben on oath never to reveal to the rest of Asante any Akyem (Abuakwa) secrets they might have come to know.<sup>1</sup> The Juaben are also said to have promised never to take up arms against Akyem.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately the Akyem paid a heavy price for allowing the Juaben presence in their country for nearly ten years. The residence of the Juaben partly encouraged Anglo-Danish rivalry for the district as a sphere of influence. It was indicative of this rivalry that in 1832 when the British stationed a few soldiers in Kyebi to watch the movements of the Akyem as well as the Juaben refugees, the Danes also did the same.<sup>3</sup> Besides, both were signatories to the 1835 Treaty of Peace between Kumasi and Juaben.<sup>4</sup> The

1. Juaben Tradition, as recorded by Rattray, Ashanti Law, p. 173.

2. A. A. Boahen, "Ashanti Research Conference," in P. J. McEwen (ed.) Nineteenth Century Africa (OUP 1968) pp. 56-7. For effects of this agreement, cf. Chapter 7 p. 250 and Chapter 10 p. 354 below.

3. Cf. p. 207 above.

4. Maclean signed for the British and Morch for the Danes, in addition to the Kumasi and Juaben signatories who were two on each side.

fundamental cause of the scramble for Akyem, however, was Danish claim to jurisdiction over Akyem, as well as neighbouring Akuapem and Krobo. The first open claim of the Danes to jurisdiction over Akyem in the nineteenth century was perhaps that made by Governor Schionning of Christiansborg Castle in 1811.<sup>1</sup> The British indirectly challenged the claim by saying that no European power possessed jurisdictional rights over any part of the Gold Coast.<sup>2</sup> This muted rivalry exploded in the 1830s when Governor Morch arrived on the coast to assume duty at Christiansborg castle. Between 1834 and 1838 he revived 'Danish claims' of jurisdiction to Akyem, Akuapem and Krobo. It was to insist on this claim that in 1834 he sent troops to escort a group of Asante subjects through Eastern Akyem.<sup>3</sup> The British could not tolerate the Danish "attempt to assert, even enforce an exclusive right to the extensive districts of Akim and Aquapim ..... [and] ..... Crobbo."<sup>4</sup> Maclean, leading the British challenge, invoked the 1831 Treaty to emphasize the independence of the Akyem states as well as Akuapem and Krobo.<sup>5</sup> Maclean and Morch took such uncompromising stands on the issue that the matter had to be taken up at high diplomatic level by their home governments. A protracted

- 
1. Schionning (CCO) to Dawson (James Fort, Accra), 17 & 20 June 1811, *Diverse Arkivaler fra Guinea* (DA fra G) No. 50.
  2. Dawson to Schionning, 17 June 1811, DA fra. G. No. 50.
  3. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 206.
  4. Council Minutes (CCC), 1 March 1836, CO.98/1<sup>A</sup>; Maclean to CAM, 8 August; CAM to CO, 5 December 1836, CO.267/136; GJ. (1837): entries, Nos. 442 & 480.
  5. Council Minutes (CCC), 15 March 1836, CO.98/1<sup>A</sup>.

correspondence took place between Copenhagen and London. The Danish Home Government eventually backed down and warned its officials in the Gold Coast not to advance any pretensions to exclusive rights over Akyem and the other two districts.<sup>1</sup>

More recently a prominent Danish historian has questioned the decision of Krabbe-Carius who was the Danish Foreign Minister during the 1830s. He insists on the existence of Danish jurisdictional right over the Akyem and the other two districts.<sup>2</sup> With regards to Akuapem and Krobo the Danish claim has been recently proved to have no basis whatever.<sup>3</sup> Nor has it any substance with respect to Akyem. The preponderance of the evidence on Akyem-Danish relations since 1730 points to friendship, and not subservience, of the Akyem states to the Danish government at Christiansborg castle, Osu. Between 1730 and 1742 Akyem rulers in general and Kotoku Kings in particular collected ground-rents for Christiansborg castle as overlords of the Ga district.<sup>4</sup> The Akyem lost this right to Asante which defeated them in 1742. They, however, continued to receive payments in the form of presents - 'dashes' as they were called - from the Danes so

---

1. British Ambassador in Denmark, Mr. Wynn, to the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Krabbe-Carius, 6 September; Gkt Minutes, 5 December 1837; DFUA draft Letter to Mr. Wynn, 3 March; DFUA to Danish Ambassador in Great Britain, 29 March 1838; DFUA to Gkt, 29 March; Gkt to Morch (CCO), 29 June; Resolution of DFUA, 8 August 1838, all in DFUA alm. korres. Intra G. korres, ediide establishment paa Guinea; CAM to CO, ? March 1838, Wynn (Copenhagen) to FO, 12 April 1838, CO.267/150; FO to Wynn, 24 July 1838, copy, FO. 211/33.

2. Norregaard, Danish Settlements, pp. 207-8.

3. Kwamena-Poh, Government, Chapter Four.

4. See Chapter 3 p. 90 above.

that the Akyem might be induced to drive their gold trade to the Danes. Such 'dashes' did not in any way subject them to the Danes politically, as the Danish Customs Board stated in 1817.<sup>1</sup> But it was left for Maclean to emphasize the point in the 1830s. After dismissing the Danish claim in relation to Krobo, he pointed out how the Akyem states and Akuapem had been vassals to Asante until 1824 when they

"upon promises of support from the British, threw of the Ashantee yoke, hoisted the British flag, and were received into British pay. Their independence having been achieved by the powerful aid of the British Government, upon what grounds can the Danish authorities come forward and claim over them territorial rights which never had any existence .... If the people themselves, if the chiefs and the inhabitants of Aquapim, Akim and Crobo, wish to place themselves under Danish protection, the case would be different, but they do not wish, and they have repeatedly appealed to the British authorities for protection against the unjust claims of Governor Morck."<sup>2</sup>

To claim British jurisdiction over Akyem and the other two districts would have been the logic of Maclean's argument, but he only declared that "the British authorities wished for no exclusive rights" over Akyem and the others.<sup>3</sup>

If Akyem was not politically subservient to neither the British nor the Danes, then something else about Akyem, and the other two districts, must have attracted the British as well as the Danes to make them wish to have the district as a sphere of influence. This was the prosperous economy of Akyem and the others. "The

---

1. General Toldkammer to DFUA, 19 July 1817. DFUA alm. korres.: 1804/1848.

2. Maclean to CAM, 4 June 1838, CO.267/150.

3. Ibid.

British," declared Maclean in his letter of 4th June 1838, "merely wish the trade [in Akyem and the other states] to be free and open to all, but they do badly complain that the Danish authorities should, under no pretext of exacting allegiance ..... stop trade, seize their goods and throw the whole country into confusion."

The prosperous economy of the three districts at this time was a reality. Akuapem and Krobo were the two pillars of the palm oil industry of the Gold Coast as from the 1830s onwards.<sup>1</sup> As for the economy of Akyem, neither of the two European trading nations, like the refugee Juaben, could afford to lose the opportunity to benefit from it. This economy is best seen through the eyes of Andreas Riis.<sup>2</sup> He distinguished four aspects of the economy; these were agriculture, hunting, gold-digging, and long distance trade to the coast. In the agricultural sector, the Akyem produced plantains, bananas, maize and various types of yam.<sup>3</sup> These agricultural products were relatively of no use to the European trading nations on the coast. In the 1830s palm oil was the agricultural product in the greatest demand by the European traders. Unfortunately for Akyem "the useful palm-tree is less at home here than in Akwapim."<sup>4</sup>

---

1. George Barnes, M. Foster & Rev. Brown to R.W. Hay, 29 February 1832, CO.267/117; EMM (1839) p. 456, cited by M. Johnson, *Migrants*; p. 17 n. 63; British Parliamentary Select Committee Report, (1842) Appx. 36; CAM to CO, 8 December 1840, CO.267/162; Fitzpatrick (CCC) to Earl Grey (CO), 10 June 1849, CO.96/15; Metcalfe, Maclean, p. 200.

2. Cf. p. 213 above for the identity of Riis.

3. EMM, 1840, Part III p.96f, cited by Johnson, *Migrants* p. 15.

4. Ibid.

Hunting in Akyem, like agriculture, was of no great benefit to Akyem - European relations, though quite useful to the Akyem themselves. This was because game in Akyem did not provide valuable furs or elephant tusks to encourage international trade. Hunting in Akyem was therefore done on a subsistence basis.

In terms of international trade, however, the Akyem found adequate compensation in the gold-digging industry. The industry seems to have been in the doldrums in the early 1820s when it was described as an unprofitable venture.<sup>1</sup> Dupuis's assertion may well be true because the first quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of great instability in the district.<sup>2</sup> The industry, however, experienced a boom in the relatively calm years of the 1830s when the people could devote much of their attention to economic matters. Demand for Akyem gold was great on account of its "extraordinarily fine" quality.<sup>3</sup> The producers made every effort to increase output. For example, they supplemented free- with slave-labour, a situation which pushed up the price of slaves.<sup>4</sup>

Gold furnished the people with a strong purchasing power, which in turn enabled them to pursue long distance trade to the coast. Andreas Riis, underlined the link

---

1. Dupuis, A Residence, Part II p. viii.

2. Cf. Chapter 5.

3. EMM 1840, Part III, cited by M. Johnson, Migrants.

4. Ibid. The 1807 British abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade did not affect domestic slavery in the Gold Coast.



between the extractive industry and the coast trade in 1839, when, as explanation to the addiction of the Akyem to gin, he said:

"There in the gold-digging we find the explanation. It provides the means and makes it possible for anyone, who tries, to buy gin from the coast. On the road from Accra to Akyem via Akuapem one meets many Akyem people loaded with gin."<sup>1</sup>

Of course the Akyem imported many other things from the coast. Among these may be mentioned textiles, knives, matchets, iron, and especially firearms and ammunition. Thus on the basis of export and import the Akyem economy was attractive enough to make both other Africans, such as the Juaben, and European traders on the coast want to share in it.<sup>2</sup> That was why contrary to the decision of the Danish Home Government in 1838, Danish officials in the Gold Coast tried to renew the Danish claim to jurisdiction over Akyem in the 1840s.

By then Dokuwa had been on the Abuakwa stool for about a quarter of a century. Her twin sons, Atta Panin and Atta Obiwom, who had been minors in 1817 when she ascended the male stool, had achieved their majority. She decided to abdicate in favour of the elder of the twins. But she remained Queen till 1856 when she died.<sup>3</sup> Atta Panin was proclaimed the new Abuakwahene in 1842. In August 1842, Edward Carstensen, the Danish Governor, sent his representatives to "supervise"

1. EMM 1840, Part III.

2. Ibid.

3. Baum (Gyadam) to Basel, 14 July 1857, No. Gyadam 7, BMA-PJC.

the enstoolment of Atta Panin.<sup>1</sup> Carstensen's move implied a renewal of Danish jurisdiction over Akyem Abuakwa. This the British found very intolerable. They strongly protested against the Danish Governor's activities as an attempt to assert Danish jurisdiction over Akyem.<sup>2</sup> Once more the Danish Government in Copenhagen advised its officials in the Gold Coast to refrain from that pretension. But the local Anglo-Danish 'scramble' for Akyem continued up to 1849 when the Danes had almost pulled out of the Gold Coast.<sup>3</sup>

The Akyem themselves partly encouraged the European rivalry. For example they were not judicious in their relations with both the British and the Danes. They unwarily invited the influence of each European power. In the 1826 war against Asante, the Akyem received arms and ammunition indiscriminately from both the British and the Danes.<sup>4</sup> In 1831 when she was in Accra to assent to the Treaty of Peace with Asante, Abuakwahene Dokuwa willingly received honours and hospitality from each of these powers with equal enthusiasm. In 1832 they submissively allowed both the Danes and the British to station troops on Akyem

---

1. Carstensen (CCO) to Copenhagen, 6 September 1842, GJ; Norregaard, Danish Settlements, p. 210.

2. President & Council (CCC) to CO, 17 December 1842; W. Hutton to James Stephens, 23 March 1843; Joseph Reid, W. Hutton & J. G. Nichols (Accra) to CCC, 8 June; Hutton to CO 27 July 1843, CO 96/2; FO to His Excellency Mr. Wynn, British Ambassador in Copenhagen, 31 July; Wynn to FO, 21 August 1843, FO 84/474; CO to FO, 16 November 1843, CO 402/1.

3. Fitzpatrick (CCC) to Carstensen (CCO), 5 June 1849, Guineske Sager: 1860-1893.

4. Reindorf, History, p. 196.

soil. In 1834 and 1842 Abuakwa and Kotoku rulers welcomed gifts from the Danes without questioning the significance of the presents. In view of the great respect they had for the woman Abuakwahene the British, especially Maclean, must have occasionally sent her gifts. He may well be right in claiming that the Akyem and others in eastern Gold Coast, often appealed to the British for justice in their judicial processes, particularly against the Danes.<sup>1</sup> And there might be some truth in the assertion that<sup>at</sup> least Abuakwa and some divisions of the Kotoku eventually adhered to the 'Bonds of 1844'<sup>2</sup> by which several Gold Coast states established closer political ties with the British Crown and thereby increased British proto-colonialism in the country. In view of all this it was quite natural that the British and the Danes should each think that they had a claim to Akyem.

The behaviour of Abuakwahene Atta Panin in 1849 justifies the above analysis. Information having reached Cape Coast Castle that he indulged in human sacrifice, he was invited to Cape Coast by Acting Governor Fitzpatrick to defend himself against the charge. Atta immediately claimed to be under Danish protection;<sup>3</sup> and the Danes backed him up.<sup>4</sup> But Fitzpatrick insisted on British right over Abuakwa, adding that Atta's "case .... is so clear that when a fitting opportunity offers itself, I shall have him arrested and see that he gives a good security for his

1. See p. 217, n. 2,           above.

2. Ward, History, p. 199.

3. Fitzpatrick (CCC) to Earl Grey (CO), 10 June 1849, CO 96/15.

4. GJ (1849), entry Nos. 824 & 825.

conduct in future." The Akyem states fully acknowledged British over-rule after 1850 when the Danes finally pulled out of the Gold Coast.

## CHAPTER 7

### ABUAKWA-KOTOKU RELATIONS AND THE BRITISH

1850-1860

Hostility characterized intra-Akyem relations between 1850 and 1860. Efforts of the British administration at Cape Coast Castle to calm the tension promoted acceptance of British authority in Akyem. It is, however, true to say that the British took the initiative, through the promulgation of the Poll Tax Ordinance in 1852, to encourage the Akyem to accept British authority.

The departure of the Danes in 1850 vaguely implied the transfer of the Akyem states to British jurisdiction. But the first concrete proof of Akyem acceptance of British authority occurred in about mid-1852 when Abuakwa and Kotoku rulers travelled all the way to Accra<sup>1</sup> to join chiefs of other states, for the purpose of endorsing the Poll Tax Ordinance promulgated by the British, and accepted by the Chiefs of the western states earlier in April 1852.<sup>2</sup> The Ordinance permitted the British, as the protecting power, to levy a poll tax of five pence on every individual, adult or child in the Protectorate. Income from the tax was partly

- 
1. Zimmermann (Accra) to Basel, ?July 1852 BMA-PJC: Governor Hill (CCC) to Earl Grey (CO,) 2 August 1852 No. 41 CO.96/25. There was no mention of Bosome representation at the Accra meeting. Nor was it mentioned at the Cape Coast meeting. Either Bosome did not send representatives or the recorders of the proceedings failed to note their presence. Living in extreme western Akyem, they may not have sent representatives to the Accra or the Cape Coast assembly.
  2. Governor Hill (CCC) to Earl Grey, 23 April 1852 CO.96/25.

to help defray administrative costs; and partly to be used in providing social amenities for the people.<sup>1</sup> The event was of great moment for the Akyem district. It was the first time, since 1831, when the Akyem states made a direct contact with and accepted British authority.

To facilitate collection of the tax the whole Protectorate was divided into districts. Akyem was one of the four districts into which the eastern sector of the Gold Coast was divided. The others were Ga, Adangme, and Akuapem. These were collectively termed the Eastern Districts, and were placed under a Chief Civil Commandant whose headquarters was Accra. A collector was stationed in each of the districts. Headquarters of the collector for Akyem was Kyebi.<sup>2</sup> Thus British authority was growing steadily in Akyem as in other places.

The first returns of the tax, besides indicating the peoples of Akyem as conscientious taxpayers, emphasized their acceptance of the British authority. Abuakwa and Kotoku together paid £1,204.00 sterling during the 1852-3 financial year.<sup>3</sup> This amount was double that paid by any of the other Eastern Districts.<sup>4</sup> Considered in relation to

1. For a full and useful discussion of this subject see Kimble, Political History, Chapter IV.
2. The records so far consulted do not show who the first collector for Akyem was. According to Sus, the Collector for Akyem<sup>1855</sup> was called "Vether". "Vether", he said, had joined the ... Niger Expedition, and had also been a printer in Sierra Leone. Prior to his appointment as Poll Tax Collector for Akyem he had been resident in Cape Coast. Cf. Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 16 October 1855, No. IV. 47, BMA-PJC.
3. Statement of Poll Tax: Income and Expenditure CO.96/33. The statement is edited and reproduced in Kimble, Political History, p. 117.
4. Evidence of Mr. T.B. Freeman, 8 June 1860 CO.96/54.

the whole of the Protectorate the total of the tax collected in Akyem was second only to that of the Anomabo District.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did Abuakwa and Kotoku soon default in paying the tax in subsequent years as several other districts did. In the 1853-4 financial year some of the districts, especially those on the coast, refused to pay the tax, on grounds that they were deriving no benefits in return. The Ga and Adangme, for example, rioted to stress their refusal. But the Akyem and the Akuapem obediently paid. Perhaps this was due partly to the persuasive tongue of Cruickshank who, following the disorders in the Ga-Adangme area, went to talk to them.<sup>2</sup> But there can be no doubt that the non-participation of the Akyem in the protest movement on the coast was mainly due to their willingness to pay the tax. Acting Governor Henry Connor emphasized this point in 1855.<sup>3</sup>

Akyem enthusiasm, however, began to wane after the 1855-6 financial year. This was not because taxation did not go with representation,<sup>4</sup> but because they received no benefits in return. Kotokuhene Agyeman underlined this point in 1857 when he told Mr. T. B. Freeman, then the Chief Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, that he and his people had paid "the tax three times but [we] have not received a single piece of cloth or anything in return".<sup>5</sup> In spite of

1. Kimble, Political History, p. 117.

2. Brodie Cruickshank acted as Governor from 27 August 1853 to 16 January 1854.

3. H. Connor (CCC) to Sidney Herbert (CO), 7 April 1855 CO.96/33.

4. Kimble, Political History, pp. 175-187.

5. Freeman's Report on a mission to Akyem, 28 December 1857, CO.96/33.

this indirect protest, both Kotoku and Abuakwa agreed to make a bulk payment of £216.00 and £288.00 respectively as the poll tax from Kotoku and Abuakwa for that year.<sup>1</sup>

Up to 1859 when some of the states had long stopped paying the tax, both states continued to pay the tax, even though they still derived no benefits from paying. In 1860, however, they seem to have refused to pay, judging from remarks made by Mr. Freeman. He noted in June 1860 that the Akyem, like others in the Protectorate were given to understand that a portion of the amount [from the tax] was to be, as it were, returned to them in the shape of direct social services. "[But] the only really direct and social benefits which the Akims have since 1852-3 received were my successful visit thither in 1857 to put peace between the two [Akyem] Kings and prevent destructive civil war, and Mr. Hesse's appointment there as clerk of the District to assist the Kings in their intercourse with the Government. This was positively all the direct benefit they received from their large payments into the public chest."<sup>2</sup> All the same there could be no doubt about the acceptance by the Akyem, of British authority.

Another way of measuring the Akyem acceptance is by British mediatory role in Akyem internal politics. Mr. Freeman's visit to Akyem in 1857 was touched off by political tension in the district. The tension, which had existed right from 1825 when Agyeman was enstooled as the Kotokuhene,

---

1. Freeman's Report on a mission to Akyem, 28 December 1857, CO.96/33.

2. Freeman's Remarks, 8 June 1860, CO.96/54.



received no relaxation in subsequent years.<sup>1</sup> In the 1850s the situation deteriorated.

Atta Panin, the elder of the twin sons of Dokuwa, the woman Abuakwahene, as already pointed out, was enstooled as Abuakwahene in 1842 when his mother abdicated in his favour.<sup>2</sup> Dokuwa had disliked Agyeman. In 1855 the report from Gyadam, the Kotoku capital, was that Abuakwahene Atta Panin was trying to bring the Kotoku under his rule.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that by the 1850s Atta had turned his mother's personal dislike for Agyeman into an official Abuakwa policy to absorb Kotoku into the Abuakwa Kingdom.

Admittedly the temptation to adopt such a policy was too great for Kyebi to resist it. Europeans on the coast were wont to regard the Abuakwahene as the King of all Akyem. In 1831 Maclean talked of seeing the Abuakwahene, and not the Kotokuhene, in Accra before concluding peace with Asante.<sup>4</sup> In the 1840s the Danes usually referred to the Abuakwa ruler as "Kongen" i.e. the King, and the Kotokuhene as "Caboceer" i.e. Chief.<sup>5</sup> The implication was that the former was superior to the latter. There is a suggestion that in those years, the British encouraged, perhaps unwittingly, Abuakwa absorption of Kotoku.<sup>6</sup> In the

1. See Chapter 6 pp. 202-3 above.

2. Cf. Chapter 6 p. 220 above.

3. Simon Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 1 June 1855, BMA-PJC.

4. See Chapter 5 p. 197 above.

5. VGR of GTK: Sager til Guineiske Journaler, 1842-3, No. 458.

6. Ward, History, p. 199 n. 17.

1850s the impression that Kotoku was under Abuakwa received greater emphasis. In 1852 when the rulers of the states of the Eastern Districts met in Accra to assent to the Poll Tax Ordinance, the Kotokuhene was described as if he was vassal to the "King of Akim", a title accorded to the Abuakwahene.<sup>1</sup> The British colonial office toed the line with its officials on these shores. In 1855 Sir George Barrow called the Kotokuhene "Captain of the King of Akims" i.e. the Abuakwahene.<sup>2</sup> Governor C. C. Pine shared Barrow's sentiments in 1857 when he too described the Kotokuhene as "a very powerful vassal, a kind of African Duke of Burgundy" in relation to the Abuakwahene.<sup>3</sup> It would be absolutely unrealistic to imagine that Abuakwa leaders were unaware of the greater recognition Europeans accorded their King vis-a-vis the Kotoku ruler.<sup>4</sup> Such a recognition was likely

- 
1. Zimmerman to Basel, ? July 1852, BMA-PJC.
  2. Memorandum of Sir George Barrow to CO, 21 December 1855 CO.96/35 cf. also Metcalfe, Documents, No. 202, pp.254-5.
  3. CC. Pine (Akuapem-Akropon) to the Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere (CO), 7 December 1857 CO.96/43. Pine was on visit to Akropon when he sent this despatch. Even as late as 1867 when there was much evidence for the British to know that the Kotokuhene was a ruler of an independent state, some of them still thought the Kotokuhene was subordinate to the Abuakwahene. For in March 1867 Governor Ussher could write thus: "I am writing to his Agyeman's fellow chief Attah Obiwom, on the subject of the barbarities practised on unoffending Ashantees by Adjaman, and if necessary, will concert measures with Attah for his removal to Cape Coast", (Ussher to Blackall, 9 March 1867, Confidential, CO 96/74. This despatch is reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents, No. 260, pp. 321-322.
  4. It is even possible that the Abuakwa rulers themselves gave the Europeans the impression that they were superior to the Kings of Kotoku.

to inflame the ego of Abuakwa and make its ruler want to regard the Kotokuhene as his inferior. An attitude of this nature could easily encourage, as it actually did, Abuakwa to adopt a policy aimed at absorbing Kotoku into its state complex.

But it was one thing adopting such a policy and quite another implementing it. Agyeman was not the person to tolerate such pretensions by Abuakwa. His intolerance no doubt explains the decision of the Kotoku in 1855 to migrate from eastern Akyem.<sup>1</sup> But two things prevented the projected migration. The first was the discovery by the Kotoku of new gold deposits in the same year of 1855.<sup>2</sup> The other was Agyeman's strained relations with Asante.

The immediate cause of the conflict with Asante was a land dispute. According to Barrow

"the King of Ashantee complained that a captain of the King of Akims [i.e. Kotokuhene] had called land in Ashantee his own, and [had] taken gold from it, and had sworn the great Ashantee Oath that the Ashantee living on that land should leave it ..... It would appear that on each bank of the Prah river, which is the boundary between Akim and Asantee there is a crom [town] the inhabitants of which are in the habit of digging gold dust, the Ashantees paying the tax to King Aggaman [Agyeman] for the privilege ... King Aggaman sent his messengers to the Ashantee side of the river to collect the tax, but his [messenger's official] cap was torn from his head, one half sent to the King of Ashantee, the other to King Aggaman with the message that if he sent 100 people with such caps they would do the same .... and King Aggaman swore by his sword that if he had not bound himself to the English Government, he would march that day to fight (sic) the Ashantees".<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 27 May 1855, No. IV. 43 BMA-PJC.

2. Sus to Basel, 29 August 1855 No. IV. 47 BMA-PJC.

3. It would be more likely for King Agyeman to swear a Kotoku oath, if indeed he did on this occasion, than the Asante oath. Wilks may well be correct in saying that the Asante oath was sworn by a lesser Kotoku Chief. Cf. Asante, p. 212.

4. Barrow's Memo, 21 December 1855 CO.86/35.

The anger was not one-sided. The Asantehene on the other hand fumed against Agyeman for swearing "the Great Oath" of Asante. He protested strongly to the British at Cape Coast Castle in their capacity as overlords of the Kotokuhene. The British then invited the Asantehene to send representatives to Cape Coast Castle to assist the Governor in an enquiry into his grievances against Kotoku. Barrow states further that the Asantehene did not oblige. There is no direct evidence showing why the Asantehene did not respond to the invitation. One can only speculate. Perhaps the King's intentions in lodging the complaint was merely to request the British protecting power to warn the Kotokuhene to refrain from claiming ownership to lands on the west bank of the Pra. The firm stand which the British took in 1853 when Asante tried to regain Assin<sup>1</sup> was too fresh to remind the Asantehene of what the British were capable of doing should he pick up a quarrel with Kotoku. Thus both Kotoku and Asante recognized the reality of British authority in Akyem. But this did not prevent Asante and Abuakwa from being hostile to Kotoku in the late 1850s. This was precisely the point which Simon Sus at Gyadam emphasized in 1855 when he remarked that "on this side [to the north of Kotoku] the great Ashantee tiger growls and threatens; on the other side [south] Atta [of Abuakwa] shows cat's claws here and there."<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the general Abuakwa policy to absorb Kotoku, there were other areas of friction between the two

---

1. Ellis (1893) p.219-220; Claridge Vol.1 pp. 485-493; Ward, History, pp. 209-212.

2. Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, EMM Part III p. 30, quoted by Marion Johnson, Migrants' p.17.

states. These included economic rivalry, missionary enterprise in Akyem, and a clash of jurisdiction. Let us examine these one after the other. First the economic rivalry. The consensus of Basel missionary eye-witness accounts is that Gyadam, the Kotoku capital, in the 1850s, was by far and away the largest town in all Akyem. It also pulsated with brisk agricultural and commercial activities quite in contrast with dull Kyebi, the inhabitants of which were described as being generally lazy.<sup>1</sup> At least one piece of contemporary evidence also shows that Kotoku had more than its fair share in the gold-digging and washing industry.<sup>2</sup> In fact the economic buoyancy of Gyadam largely influenced Sus in 1854 to select it as the base for Basel Missionary enterprise in Akyem.<sup>3</sup> This economic prosperity could easily excite jealousy from Abuakwa. The Akan proverb says the stranger gets rich only at the expense of the native. Strictly speaking the Kotoku, though Akyem, were strangers in Abuakwa. Kyebi could not afford to see them prosper without feeling uneasy in mind.

To worsen the situation was the selection of Gyadam as the missionary station in Akyem. Akyem's earliest contact with Christianity was perhaps in 1770.

- 
1. Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 3 February 1852; Widman and Mader (Akropon-Akuapem) to Basel, 3 March 1852; Mader's Reisbericht (Report) on a visit to Sus at Gyadam in 1854, dated 21 April 1854; Zimmermann's Report on a journey to Eastern Akyem, ? May 1858, BMA-PJC.
  2. Freeman's Report on a mission to Akyem in 1857 to enquire into Abuakwa-Kotoku relations, dated 28 December 1857 CO.96/57.
  3. Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 9 January 1854, BMA-PJC.

In that year Danish Governor Gerhard Wrigsberg of Christiansborg Castle introduced to Abuakwahene Obirikoran four Moravian missionaries at the Castle.<sup>1</sup> Nothing came out of the contact. Obirikoran was then too pre-occupied with political instability in his Kingdom to have any thought for a strange religion. The next contact was made in 1839 when, as already pointed out elsewhere, Andreas Riis visited Eastern Akyem.<sup>2</sup> At the end of his visit he concluded that the district was not ready yet for Christianity.<sup>3</sup> It was thirteen years later that Akyem had two missionary visits, one by Simon Sus in January 1852 and the other by J. A. Mader and J. G. Widmann in February of the same year.<sup>4</sup> All three missionaries reported the eagerness of the Abuakwahene to have a mission station opened in Kyebi. He even asked Sus to take two of his sons, Gyekye and Asirifi, to Akropon and enroll them in the mission school which had been established there. But the Basel missionaries, led by Sus, rather chose Gyadam, partly for its economic advantages and partly because they felt that together with many nearby towns like Asuboa, Mmuoso,

---

1. P. Steiner, Eir Blatt aus den Beschite den Bruder mission (Basel, 1888) p.36f, cited by Debrunner, A History of Christianity in Ghana (Accra 1967) p.126 n.3; Reindorf, History, p. 217. For an account of Obirikoran's reign see Chapter 4 pp.II4-I57 above.

2. See Chapter 6 p.2I3 above.

3. EMM 1840 Part III.

4. Sus (Akropon, Akuapem) to Basel, 3 February; Widmann and Mader (Akropon) to Basel, 23 March 1852, BMA-PJC.

Adasawase, Ankaase, Abompe, Osino etc., Gyadam would be an excellent starting point.<sup>1</sup>

The selection of Gyadam as the first Christian Mission Station in Akyem hurt the feelings of the Abuakwa Court,<sup>2</sup> to the extent that Atta Panin ordered all the Abuakwa towns surrounding Gyadam not to entertain the enterprise. Consequently between 1854 and March 1860 only thirteen converts were made; and out of this number only five of them were native Akyem.<sup>3</sup>

Naturally the Abuakwahene would regard the Kotoku of Gyadam as the people who had upset his apple-cart. To add insult to injury the Kotokuhene sold to the missionaries the land on which the missionaries built the mission station.<sup>4</sup> The Kotoku as refugees had not made an outright acquisition of the land around Gyadam. Agyeman therefore had no right to sell any part thereof. Though Sus and other missionaries who worked at the station in the 1850s did not directly say that the sale offended the Kyebi Court, yet the fact that in 1859 the Abuakwahene referred to the land as his,<sup>5</sup> points to the anger of Abuakwa at the sale.

1. Sus to Basel, 3 February 1852, Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 6 September 1853, 9 January 1854 No. III.3; Widmann (Akropon) to Basel 3 January 1854, BMA-PJC.
2. Baum (Gyadam) to Basel, 1 April 1857, No. Gyadam 6, BMA-PJC.
3. Sus (Gyadam) to Basel, 28 December 1857 No. Gyadam 21; Haas to Basel, 29 August 1859 No. Gyadam 14; Mader's Report on a journey from Akropon (Akuapem) to Gyadam in August 1859, 7 September 1859, No. Gyadam 31, BMA-PJC.
4. Baum (Gyadam) to Basel, 1 April 1857, No. Gyadam 6, BMA-PJC.
5. Haas (Gyadam) to Basel, 1 April 1857, No. Gyadam 6, BMA-PJC.

But perhaps the greatest source of conflict was the clash of jurisdiction. By December 1857 relations between Abuakwa and Kotoku had so deteriorated as to draw them to the brink of war. Reporting from Akropon, the Akuapem capital, on the explosive situation in Akyem, Governor C. C. Pine in December said that

"the powerful kingdom of Akim which borders this Akuapem is ..... in a very disturbed state. The sovereignty of it is divided between the King and a powerful vassal [i.e. Agyeman], a kind of African Duke of Burgundy, and on account of supposed insults, these two potentates are on the point of coming to blows. As each party can bring a large force into the field, the result of such a war might be very serious, more especially as the country borders on that of the Ashantees who might perhaps interfere in the quarrel."<sup>1</sup>

To prevent the situation from getting out of hand, Pine quickly sent Mr. Freeman, the Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, to try and resolve the situation in a peaceful manner.

The remote cause of the impending war was two-fold. Since 1855 Abuakwa had tried to institute a blockade of the trade routes to the coast against Kotoku, as well as Bosome, because of the latter's close relationship with Kotoku; besides the Abuakwa were in the habit of way-laying, seizing, detaining and robbing Kotoku traders.<sup>2</sup> The immediate cause was what Freeman vaguely described as "unnecessary demands" which Abuakwahene Atta Panin was in the habit of making on Agyeman of Kotoku. Freeman did not

---

1. C. C. Pine (Akropon) to the Rt. Hon. Labouchere, 7 December 1857 CO.96/43.

2. Freeman's Report, 28 December 1857 CO.96/43.



explain directly what he meant by "unnecessary demands", but his report was detailed enough to explain it.

According to him, the stool of Muosu became vacant when the Chief, Abrokwa, died. Muosu, to his thinking was a "Kotoku" town. Abrokwa's successor was a minor called "Obriar" (Obiri Yaw). The people of Muosu therefore appointed Pepra, a relative, to act as Regent. Obiri Yaw had somehow incurred a debt of 8 oz. of gold or 4 preguans and Pepra was asked to pay the debt. Pepra refused, and in this he had the support of his two brothers, Kofi Nyame, a very rich man who had earlier declined the regency, and Badu, who was a son-in-law to Kotokuhene Agyeman. The three brothers would still not co-operate even when the people of Muosu undertook to pay two-thirds of the debt. The Kotokuhene himself pleaded with the brothers but to no avail. Whether or not the Kotokuhene went beyond mere pleas, the report does not say, but the three brothers suddenly left Muosu for Kyebi and lodged a complaint with the Abuakwahene against the Kotokuhene.<sup>1</sup>

By their conduct the three Muosu men had brought about a clash of jurisdiction between the two independent states; besides they had indirectly suggested the subordination of Gyadam to Kyebi unless of course they claimed Abuakwa citizenship. For, it seems that the Abuakwahene invited his Kotoku counterpart to appear before the Kyebi Court for an enquiry into the matter. In terms of Akan diplomatic etiquette such a request would amount to an "unnecessary demand", even an insult, to the Kotoku ruler who was an independent sovereign. On the other hand the

---

1. Freeman's Report.

Abuakwahene was in a real dilemma. The Kotoku were living on his land, and were therefore his guests. As a host he had to seek the welfare of all his guests. Nothing should prevent him from composing misunderstandings among his guests. But since the Kotokuhene himself was involved, he ought to have been more diplomatic in order not to offend the dignity of his colleague. As it was, the Abuakwahene apparently felt that Agyeman was not his equal. It is reasonable to imagine Agyeman not only refusing to go to Kyebi for the arbitration, but also becoming very angry with Atta for regarding him as his inferior, especially if Agyeman was indeed what he has been made to appear, namely "a man of overbearing character likely to inflame any bad feeling rather than sooth it."<sup>1</sup> There was already much bad feeling created by the Abuakwa economic blockade since 1855 and in the Abuakwa habit of raiding, robbing and sending peaceful Kotoku traders into detention.

Agyeman could no longer contain himself; he resolved on war with Atta to preserve Kotoku dignity and independence. He was at the point of marching on Kyebi when one Abuakwa Chief is said to have invoked an oath to restrain him from firing until the British Protectorate government had been given an opportunity to look into the matter.<sup>2</sup>

Whoever that chief was, his indirect intervention was timely and wise. It prevented the immediate outbreak of

---

1. Ward, History, p. 222. But see a contrary view in Horton, West African Countries, page 120.

2. Sus's Jahreisbericht on Gyadam Mission Station, 1 March 1859 BMA-PJC. The identity of the chief is not disclosed.

war and thus enabled Freeman, Pine's representative, to travel from Akropon on 8th December to Eastern Akyem where he arrived on 10th December 1857. Freeman spent eight days investigating the tension. His carefully considered conclusion was that the Abuakwahene had been interfering in Kotoku internal affairs; and had also erred in detaining Kotoku citizens, more than fifty-seven of whom were still in Kyebi cells at the time of Freeman's visit.<sup>1</sup> He returned the verdict of guilty against Atta.

The Abuakwahene did not challenge the verdict. In fact he could not have done so. He agreed to release all the Kotoku subjects he was holding in detention, and to restore whatever goods he had robbed them of. On the subject of restitution, however, he argued that since Pepra, Nyame, and Badu, the three Muosu rebels "had largely partaken of the property so plundered, they should also share in the restitution now to be made."<sup>2</sup> The Kotokuhene also agreed to the peaceful settlement of his quarrels with Kyebi. He was prepared to forgive and forget. On 20th December 1857 when Freeman was all set for his return journey to Accra, Agyeman asked him, to

"tell Coffee Yammie and Pipira<sup>3</sup> that I freely forgive them ..... and that I hope they will immediately return home and dwell peacefully with me; but if they do not wish at present to return, they must proceed at once to the coast and remain there for a time under the care of the Government until they can feel comfortable in their minds to come back".<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Freeman's Report.

2. Ibid.

3. Badu was in Gyadam, having returned thither with Freeman.

4. "Police Memorandum made in Akim, December 20, 1857", as Enclosure No. 19<sup>A</sup> in Supplement to Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.

Agyeman also requested Freeman to

"tell Atta that all being now settled .... between Coffee Yammie, Pipira, and Baddoo and myself ..... I hope all the past evil things between us will be forgotten; that he will no more stop the paths trade routes against me and my people ..... that he will also open the path which has been shut for the past two years against my subjects of Essuadru."<sup>1</sup>

Thus in 1857 British authority was invoked to compose disputes in Akyem. The British authority in Akyem was now a reality.

To the extent that it prevented immediate outbreak of war between Abuakwa and Kotoku, Freeman's mission was successful. But the subsequent recalcitrance of Pepra and his brothers considerably detracted from this achievement. Contrary to expectation, they refused to restore their share of the loot, as demanded by the Abuakwahene.<sup>2</sup> They fell out with their protector over the issue and subsequently left Abuakwa for Akuapem. There they established a base at Mampon, and with Akuapem support, especially that of Okuapemhene Kwao Dade, they embarked on terrorist activities against Kotoku traders and travellers passing through Akuapem to and from the Ga coast.<sup>3</sup>

The Akuapem support for the Muosu rebels led to strained relations between Gyadam and Akropon. It is not known for certain exactly when the three Muosu marauders

---

1. "Essuadru" i.e. Akyem Soaduro, capital of the Bosome state in Western Akyem; for relations between Kotoku and Bosome, see pp. 267-8 below.

2. See p. 238 n.2 above.

3. Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.

left Kyebi. Probably they did so after the 1858 British expedition against Krobo.<sup>1</sup> For Abuakwa, Kotoku and Akuapem showed their loyalty to the British by providing contingents to join the governmental expeditionary force. In any case by 1859 they were in Akuapem, raiding Kotoku communications with the Ga coast.<sup>2</sup> Supported by Akuapem accomplices they

"were determined to waylay Agiman's people on the paths in Aquapim and panyar and plunder; thus evincing in 1859 the same perverse spirit which they had shown in Akim in 1857, and which had well nigh brought on actual hostilities"

between Abuakwa and Kotoku.<sup>3</sup>

The effect of the activities of the Muosu rebels in Akuapem was greater than the straining of Gyadam-Akropon relations. They disrupted trade. To the Cape Coast Castle administration this was a very serious matter. Closely linked with this adverse economic effect was the political side. The Akuapem support and sympathy for the three Kotoku marauders were both private and official. For while the people of Mampon assisted them in the actual raids and the robbing of Kotoku traders, Kwao Dade, the

- 
1. For a useful account of events leading to the expedition, its course and outcome, see Freda Wolfson, "A Price Agreement on the Gold Coast - The Krobo Oil Boycott, 1858-1866", in *Economic History Review* (London) 1953 Vol. VI No. 1.
  2. Freeman (Kpong) to Okuapemhene Kwao Dade, 12 February 1859, as Encl. No. 23; Hesse (Kyebi) to Freeman (Accra), 10 May 1859, as Encl. No. 26, same to same, 21 May 1859, as Encl. No. 27, Ross (?Akropon) to Freeman (Accra), 1 September 1859 (Extract) all in Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.
  3. Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.

Okuapemhene accorded them considerable patronage. For example he granted Badu a court action against Sus. Badu's complaint was Sus's offer to be a caretaker of the former's personal property at Gyadam. When the three men left Akyem, Kotokuhene Agyeman anticipated future trouble from them. To prevent this he appointed Sus to take care of the property of Badu in Gyadam.<sup>1</sup> Sus visited Akropon in 1859 and immediately Badu went to lodge a complaint with the Okuapemhene that Sus had seized his (Badu's) property. But for a strong warning from the Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, Kwao Dade would have indulged Badu with a court hearing.<sup>2</sup>

Agyeman of Kotoku took a serious view of the conduct of Akuapem, and warned the Protectorate Government that continued Akuapem support for his rebel subjects might bring "a row between him and Aquapim."<sup>3</sup> His expulsion of David Asante, the Akuapem born Basel Mission catechist, from Gyadam in or about August 1859,<sup>4</sup> must be seen as a kind of Kotoku retaliation to the Akuapem support for the Muoso renegades. Agyeman refused to rescind the expulsion order when the other missionary personnel pleaded with him.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. Hesse (Kyebi) to Freeman, 3 May 1858 CO.96/48.

2. Freeman (Accra) to Okuapemhene, 12 February 1859 copy as Encl. No. 23 in Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.

3. Hesse (Kyebi) to Freeman, 21 May 1859, as Encl. No. 27 in Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.

4. Haas (Gyadam) to Basel, 29 August 1859 No. Gyadam 19 BMA-PJC.

5. Ibid.

There was thus a great need for the Protectorate government to take a quick and firm action, if only to prevent a possible war between Kotoku and Akuapem. Freeman was still the Commandant of the Eastern Districts. He carefully analysed the situation and came to the conclusion that the solution of the matter lay, not in Gyadam, but Akropon. Consequently he strongly warned Kwao Dade that Gyadam matters were beyond Akropon jurisdiction and that Kwao must not dabble in them.<sup>1</sup> Freeman also asked the Okuapemhene to withdraw immediately his support from the Kotoku rebels, and

"to warn Baddoo and those connected with him, that if they attempt any interference with Agyeman and his people or Mr. Sus, or any matter connected with the palaver about which I visited Akim in 1857 ..... I will call upon the Military Authorities to send a force and bring them down to the coast for punishment. And let them not fancy that I am indulging in empty and unnecessary threats. Their conduct has been so bad in creating troubles and disturbances that we can no longer bear with them if they continue such proceedings".

Freeman followed words with action. In late 1859 he sent a platoon of soldiers to Akuapem to arrest the Kotoku rebels and any others who supported them. But the Okuapemhene is said to have forewarned Badu and his brothers. Consequently they fled Akuapem before the soldiers arrived there, and shifted their operational base to the Akyem-Akuapem border from where they continued to commit "greater outrages" against their own countrymen.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Freeman (Kpong) to Okuapemhene, 12 February 1859, copy; cf. also Freeman (Kpong) to Sus (Akropon) 12 February 1859, copy, both as Encl. Nos. 23 & 24 in Freeman's Written Defence, CO.96/48.

2. Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.

The flight of the three 'rebels' did not in any way exonerate Akuapem from an attempt to disturb inter-state relations which could bring about general public chaos in the Eastern Districts. The government of Acting Governor Bird felt that the Okuapemhene must be punished to serve as a deterrent to other chiefs. At a court held at Asabi, at the foot of the Larteh Hills, on the Larteh-Ayikuma road, Acting Governor Bird investigated the matter and fined the Okuapemhene "1000 heads of cowries".<sup>1</sup> Thus Akyem affairs were helping, however negatively, to entrench British authority not only in Akyem itself but in neighbouring Akuapem.

By 1859 Gyadam-Kyebi relations had once more taken a turn for the worse. Atta Panin had died in May 1858.<sup>2</sup> His younger brother, Atta Obiwom, had succeeded to the stool as the new Abuakwahene. Obiwom was a more fiery character, given to excessive drinking.<sup>3</sup> While he was inclined to foment trouble,<sup>4</sup> his councillors were wont to instigate him to take a more aggressive line with Gyadam. Among his bad advisers were Appiatu, described as "Chief Adviser," the Ahene mma (i.e. sons of Abuakwa Kings, past and present), and above all his sister, whom Captain de Ruvignes in 1860 described as "a perfect firebrand" who assisted Obiwom with

---

1. Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48. One thousand heads of cowries were valued at 600 dollars.

2. Testimony of Kotokuhene Agyeman before the Executive Council, cf. Minutes, 16 July 1860 CO.96/48.

3. See p. 246 below.

4. See Chapter 6 p. 2II above.



money.<sup>1</sup> Clearly in character and in council Obiwom was not cut to promote cordial relations between Abuakwa and Kotoku.

Barely a year after his enstoolment he seems to have renewed the old policy of hostility towards Gyadam. For in May 1859 Agyeman complained of Obiwom's habit of ordering the seizure, robbing, flogging, and detention of Kotoku subjects.<sup>2</sup> By the beginning of 1860 Abuakwa and Kotoku had moved to the brink of war. The explosive situation caused Mr. Hesse, the Government agent at Kyebi, very anxious moments. Nor were the two Akyem rulers themselves happy with the situation. In January 1860, Obiwom of Abuakwa complained to Mr. Hesse, for the information of the Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, about his quarrels with Agyeman.<sup>3</sup> Freeman, still the Civil Commandant, promised to proceed to Akyem to investigate the tension.<sup>4</sup> In February he was twice informed that "Obewoom and Ageman are expecting you everyday."<sup>5</sup> But Freeman did not turn up as he had promised,<sup>6</sup> and in March 1860 war broke out between Abuakwa and Kotoku.<sup>7</sup>

- 
1. Capt. de Ruvignes (Soaduro) to Cape Coast Castle, 5 May 1860 CO.96/47.
  2. Kotokuhene Agyeman to Freeman (Accra), 9 May 1859 CO.96/48.
  3. Freeman's Written Defence, 8 June 1860 CO.96/48.
  4. Freeman (Accra) to Hesse (Kyebi) 26 January 1860 CO.48.
  5. Hesse to Freeman, 15 February; cf. also same to same, 23 February 1860 CO.96/48 copies.
  6. He, in June, attributed his failure to go to Akyem to the preference of Acting Governor Bird to rely on military men. Eventually the Governor failed to send such men in time.
  7. Acting Governor Bird (CCC) to the Duke of Newcastle, 2 April 1860 CO.96/47.

The war had both remote and immediate causes. The remote cause was that habit of Abuakwa in manhandling, abusing and maltreating Kotoku citizens, as complained by the Kotokuhene in 1859.<sup>1</sup> It is not unlikely that Kotoku retaliated by similar methods. As to the immediate cause oral traditional evidence ascribes it to a dispute between Obiwom and Agyeman over some gold nuggets.<sup>2</sup> This traditional view does not wholly tie in with contemporary evidence. Ward is much nearer the truth in thinking that the fundamental cause of the war was the attempt of the Abuakwahene to claim "some sort of suzerainty over Kotoku."<sup>3</sup> The Abuakwahene, however, did not necessarily try to do this by "demanding a share of [Kotoku] mining profits", as Ward would have us believe. Contemporary evidence gives three slightly different versions of the immediate cause of the war. The first is that of Major Cochrane, officer commanding the troops at Cape Coast Castle. In March 1860 Acting Governor Bird sent him to Akyem with instructions to prevent the impending war in that District. Cochrane arrived there on or about 4th March and set his court at "Ashiaquah" (Asiakwa), almost mid-way between Kyebi and Gyadam; here he hoped to arbitrate between Atta Obiwom and Kofi Agyeman. He failed to get the two

---

1. See n. 2 p.244 above.

2. AAT: Begoro & Pamen (1925/6); Bosome Tradition, cited by Ward, History, p. 222 n. 26; Ameyaw, Oda Tradition (1963) pp. 12-14; AKT: Adoagyiri & Awisa (1968/9). AAT: Kukurantumi (1925/6) confuses events in 1857 and 1860, and therefore must not be relied upon. AAT: Asiakwa & Kwaben (1925/6) mention the war and its effects but do not touch on cause.

3. Ward, History, p. 222.

leaders to come to Asiakwa and by 8th March the war had begun, forcing him to quit Asiakwa for Anyinasin, about two miles to the east. Writing from Anyinasin, Cochrane said that the immediate cause of the war was the Abuakwahene's

"desire to possess himself of Affram's nephews and their property amounting to more than a hundred persons and a considerable amount of gold and goods taken away from Agjeman's territory."<sup>1</sup>

A month later Captain de Ruvignes was sent to replace Cochrane as mediator, because Cochrane reported his inability to prevent or stop the war single-handed. De Ruvignes sent in a report in April that

"the whole war has been brought about by him Atta Obiwom to gratify a favourite of his named Affram who being a drunkard, and I consider the lowest kind, was perpetually calling on his relatives who were under the protection [?] jurisdiction of Adjeman to help him pay debts incurred by him in his excesses."<sup>2</sup>

Captain de Ruvignes may have obtained his information from Strömberg, the Basel missionary stationed at Gyadam, who is our third source. De Ruvignes's report ties in well with Strömberg's. According to Stromberg the cause of the war was Abuakwa interference in Kotoku internal affairs. Expounding on this Stromberg averred that Affram was a Kotoku citizen of Gyadam. Affram one day suddenly left for Kyebi and from there requested that all his relatives be sent to him at Kyebi. Obiwom backed Affram, and sent soldiers to escort Affram's relatives from Gyadam to

- 
1. Major Cochrane ("Aniah Sing" i.e. Anyinasin) to Ag. Governor Bird (CCC), 8 March 1860, CO.96/47. Affram was a citizen of Kotoku.
  2. Capt. de Ruvignes (Akyem) to Cape Coast Castle, 13 April 1860 CO.96/47.

Kyebi.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that Affram had decided to transfer his allegiance to Kyebi, which act could easily be a source of inter-state friction, as exemplified on this occasion. The people of Gyadam, the missionary states further, abused the Kyebi escorts and chased them out of the town. Moreover Kotokuhene Agyeman swore to go to war against Kyebi, "rather than give them [Affram's relatives] up".<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from all these pieces of contemporary evidence that the immediate cause of the 1860 war was Kyebi attempt to claim jurisdiction over some Kotoku subjects who had not willingly renounced their Kotoku citizenship. It is thus not difficult to see that still at play, was the old Abuakwa plan to absorb the Kotoku state by subjecting its ruling house to the Kyebi stool. The policy was hostile to Kotoku sovereignty, and seemsto explain why in early 1859 Kotokuhene Agyeman once again revived the idea of emigrating from Eastern to Western Akyem in order to be much further away from the Abuakwa capital.<sup>3</sup>

The migration idea took a definite form in late 1859 when Agyeman finally decided to implement it, but not until he had fought Abuakwa.<sup>4</sup> Thus an additional and

---

1. Stromberg (Gyadam) to Basel, 20 March 1860 No. Gyadam 4 BMA-PJC.

2. Minutes of the Executive Council Meeting (CCC), 16 July 1860 CO.96/48.

3. Sus's Jahresbericht on Gyadam, 1 March 1859 BMA-PJC.

4. Kromer's Report on Gyadam Mission Station for the 4th Quarter of 1859, 12 January 1860, No. Gyadam 26, BMA-PJC.

perhaps a weightier immediate cause of the war was Kotoku resolve to wage it. British efforts to prevent the war did not deflect Kotoku from the step they had decided to take. This must not necessarily be attributed to a deficiency in British authority in Akyem but to Kotoku determination to teach Abuakwa a lesson. For, as shall be seen in due course, immediately after the war Agyeman as well as Atta Obiwom co-operated with the British officials to end the dispute.

In anticipation of the emigration to western Akyem, in late 1859 and early 1860 the people of Gyadam and the few other nearby Kotoku towns performed intensive custom for their dead and fetishes.<sup>1</sup> Next Agyeman sent a large section of his people, consisting mainly of women, children, and the aged, ahead on the journey to western Akyem.

It appears that Agyeman had done all this even before Major Cochrane arrived in eastern Akyem, a situation which made more difficult his task of mediation in order to prevent war.

Kyebi put an army of two thousand strong into the field as against the eight hundred of Gyadam.<sup>2</sup> The figure for Kyebi, though much larger than that of Gyadam, was relatively small, considering that three years later Abuakwa could put more than 5,000 into the field at a short notice. This suggests that not all Abuakwa favoured the war with Kotoku, as de Ruvignes discovered. The Asiakwahene, otherwise styled Nifahene of Abuakwa, is said to have disapproved

---

1. Joint Jahresbericht of Haas & Kromer on Gyadam, 12 January 1860 No. Gyadam I, BMA-PJC.

2. Stromberg to Locher, 26 March 1860, No. Gyadam 8 (BMA-PJC).

of the attitude of Kyebi.<sup>1</sup> It looks as if the war was between Kyebi and Gyadam, and not Abuakwa and Kotoku. Obiwom carried the war to Agyeman, thereby taking the initiative from the latter whose oath to fight tends to suggest him as the aggressor.

The evidence of the missionaries at Gyadam shows that two major battles took place, one very near the mission station on the outskirts of Gyadam. They estimated that about three hundred souls perished on both sides. There are conflicting views in traditional history on the outcome of the war. Almost all available Abuakwa stools traditions claim victory for Kyebi, adding the detail that the Abuakwa army burnt down Gyadam.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand Kotoku claim to have won the war, saying that had Dompere, one of their leading war chiefs, wished, he could have killed the Abuakwahene whom he cornered.<sup>3</sup> The Kotoku claim ties in fairly well with contemporary eye-witness account recorded by the Basel missionaries at Gyadam. They say that in the two major battles the Kotoku army so routed Atta Obiwom's forces that he sent to Akuapem for military assistance.<sup>4</sup> Either Kwao Dade did not respond favourably or Obiwom felt there was need for still more assistance from outside because it was also known then that he

---

1. Report of Capt. de Ruvignes, 13 April 1860.

2. AAT: Asiakwa, Begoro, Kwaben, Kukurantumi, Wankyi, Pamen etc. (1925/6).

3. AKT: Adoagyiri (1968/9). For more accounts on Dompere See Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 below.

4. Stromberg to Basel, 20 March, 1860, No. Gyadam 1; Stromberg to Locher (? Akropon), 26 March 1860, No. Gyadam 8 (BMA-PJC).

"sent to invite the Ashantees to come and assist him to take off Adjiman's head."<sup>1</sup>

Asante obliged. This was as to be expected.

Already the Asantehene had an axe to grind against Agyeman who in 1855 had claimed lands beyond the Pra as his.<sup>2</sup> The invitation gave Asante a chance to settle old scores with Kotoku. Kumasi therefore detailed the palatine chiefs of Juaben and Kokofu and the province of Kwawu to go to the aid of Kyebi.<sup>3</sup> Proximity and old understanding seem to have been the criteria for selecting the three chiefs to goto the aid of Atta Obiwom. While Kwawu was the immediate north-eastern neighbour of Eastern Akyem and could therefore speedily move in on Gyadam, Kokofu was a nearby north-western neighbour and could easily cut Agyeman's line of march to western Akyem. As for Juaben, it may have remembered the concordat it had made with Kyebi in 1840.<sup>4</sup>

The Juaben and Kwawu forces arrived in April 1860. By then the Kotoku had abandoned Gyadam and other towns of theirs and left for Western Akyem. It was this desertion which, according to the missionaries, enabled the Abuakwa to burn down Gyadam and other Kotoku towns like Mmoseaso.

1. Capt. de Ruvignes (Soaduro) to CCC, 5 May 1860 CO.96/47.

2. See p. 230 above.

3. Stromberg to Basel, 31 March 1860 No. Gyadam 9 BMA-PJC; Mr. Freeman (Accra) to Governor Andrews (CCC), 21 April; Andrews to Freeman, 25 April; Capt. de Ruvignes (Soaduro) to Andrews (CCC), 5 May; Andrews to Asantehene, 9 May 1860 CO.96/70.

4. See Chapter 6 p. 214 above.

The Kokofu force was much luckier in encountering the migrant Kotoku army and joining battle with it. But the Kokofu army suffered a defeat and many of their men appear to have fallen in the battle, one of them described as "Adarquah of Kookoofoo".<sup>1</sup> The Asantehene, however, tried to cover this incident by presenting it as an unprovoked Kotoku attack on his Kokofu subjects.<sup>2</sup> Governor Andrews dismissed the Asantehene's complaint by telling the Kumasi Court bluntly that if Kokofu had suffered any damage, it had itself to blame, as it had chosen to go to war against Agyeman and his subjects.<sup>3</sup> Apparently Kumasi had underrated the fighting power of Kotoku and sent only a limited army to assist Abuakwa; besides not all the Asante help arrived in time to turn the scales against Kotoku.

His defeats in March and the subsequent failure of the limited Abuakwa-Asante Alliance appear to explain Obiwom's determination to carry the war to Agyeman even in Western Akyem. Apparently the outcome of the early encounters shocked him. Initially he probably had hoped to inflict a quick and heavy defeat on his adversary. He seems to have been very sure of this. Hence his refusal in early March to yield to the pleas of Cnchrane, telling the Major in the face that he (Obiwom) had renounced

- 
1. "Adarquah of Kookoofoo" i.e. Adaakwa, Chief of Kokofu.
  2. Asantehene to Governor Andrews (CCC), 25 April 1860 CO.96/47.
  3. Andrews to Asantehene, 9 May 1860; same to same, 20 September 1860 copies in CO.96/70.



"his allegiance to the British Government, conceiving that it is merely a thing to speak of, and that the Government has no power capable of compelling him at this distance to accept its verdict, at least not one given on what he terms 'his own soil'".<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from Obiwom's declaration above that in a way the war was a challenge to the British jurisdiction; though the outburst may be dismissed as emotionally made in moments of anxiety.

After his defeats in March it was bitterness and bad advice<sup>2</sup> which goaded Obiwom on to further hostility against Kotoku. These were fundamental elements likely to prolong the war in Akyem, if they were not dealt with in a realistic and energetic manner. To Captain de Ruvignes, the solution of the problem lay in Kyebi. He therefore recommended the seizure and detention of Obiwom and his bad advisers such as Appiatu, and Obiwom's sister.<sup>3</sup> Governor Andrews had just assumed duty at Cape Coast Castle. His knowledge about local politics was no doubt limited. And yet he rejected de Ruvignes's suggestion because such a step, he argued, taken by the government, would smack of high-handedness and cowardice.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Major Cochrane (Anyinasin) to Ag. Governor Bird (CCC), 8 March 1860 CO.96/47.

2. See n.3 below.

3. Capt. de Ruvignes (Soaduro) to Governor Andrews (CCC), 5 May 1860 CO.96/47.

4. Alphonso Cary, Ag. Colonial Secretary (CCC) to Capt. de Ruvignes Soaduro, 8 May 1860 CO.96/47. At the time when de Ruvignes made the suggestion, Appiatu and Obiwom's sister were in Kyebi, while the Abuakwa army was still in the field. The two advisers were thus unprotected.

Fortunately for Andrews, things began to sort themselves out in Akyem as from the last week of May 1860. The truculence of Kyebi started to subside. Several factors contributed to the change in the attitude of the Kyebi leaders. One of them was the divided opinion in Abuakwa. The war excitement in Kyebi was in fact by no means universal in Abuakwa. Certain important sections of the Abuakwa people doubted whether war was the right approach to solve the Abuakwa-Kotoku differences. The Gyaase Division, headed by Kwaben, is said to have allowed Agyeman and his subjects to pass through their lines unmolested during the journey to western Akyem.<sup>1</sup> Another division which did not favour the war was the Nifa (Right), headed by Asiakwa.<sup>2</sup> The Nifahene at the time was Duodu. He was said to have been

"much opposed to the manner in which Atta /Obiwom/ has acted in not in the first instance obeying the Governor's orders, and that he Doodo has expressed his determination to meet me /Governor Andrews/ at Christiansborg, and that Attah should accompany him there,"

to enable the government to settle his disputes with Agyeman.<sup>3</sup> Obviously the Nifahene had been making moves on his own initiative towards a peace settlement between Kyebi and Gyadam.. The move paid off. By the third week of May bellicose Kyebi had so cooled down that Obiwom informed Captain de Ruvignes that he would

---

1. AAT: Pomase (Abomosu) 1925/6.

2. Capt. de Ruvignes (Asiakwa) to CCC, ? April 1860  
CO.96/47.

3. Andrews (CCC) to the Duke of Newcastle, 9 June 1860  
CO.96/47.

"no more make war with Adjeman ..... but will return back (sic) to Chebi by your orders to await there for the appointed time for us to go to Accra<sup>1</sup>."

The change in the attitude of Abuakwa leadership immediately eased the tension in Akyem. But it did not altogether eliminate it. Nor did the Kotoku migration to the west. As late as 1863 Obiwom claimed that the land on which Agyeman and his subjects had settled on in western Akyem fell within his jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup> The Protectorate government had to send an embassy of Fante Chiefs to Kyebi in order to get Obiwom to revise his hostile stand against Kotoku.<sup>3</sup> The Abuakwahene agreed in principle, but it was not until 1870 that Abuakwa and Kotoku concluded a formal peace treaty at the town of Akanten.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the deaths of both Agyeman and Atta Obiwom in 1867 also contributed to this happy result.<sup>5</sup> But a considerable part of the credit must go to Ferguson<sup>6</sup> who arranged the Akanten peace. Even at this time, 1870, when at least ten years had lapsed since the war broke out,

---

1. Abuakwahene Atta Obiwom (Akantin-Akyem) to de Ruvignes (Soaduro), 23 May 1860, CO.96/47.

2. See Chapter 8 p. 269 below.

3. Kromer (Kyebi) to Basel, 1 November 1863, No. Akim 18 BMA-PJC.

4. Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 5 January 1871, No. Akim 19, BMA-PJC.

5. See Chapter 8, p. 304 on the demise of the Akyem rulers.

6. George Ekem Ferguson is better known as the African Surveyor through whose activities the British Colonial Government in the Gold Coast was able to colonize the northern territories of the Gold Coast. For a useful biography of Ferguson see Sampson, M. J. Gold Coast Men of Affairs, London 1969 pp. 129-146.

feelings were very high. The Kotoku, for example wanted to lay down conditions which the Abuakwa peace negotiators could not accept. One of the conditions was that a certain head of an ex-Gyadam family who had sworn fetish to serve the Abuakwa stool and had therefore been allowed to settle in eastern Akyem by the Abuakwahene should be handed over.<sup>1</sup> According to the missionary Lodholtz, this condition was clearly a vindictive strain in some of the Kotoku negotiators because it was not supported by Kwabena Fua, the new Kotokuhene. Eventually the Kotoku negotiators dropped the request and the peace settlement was effected.

The ceremony of the peace settlement is worth describing, if only to serve as an illustration of how Gold Coast Africans of the nineteenth century concluded formal peace treaties among themselves. Lodholtz states that Ferguson's interpreter, first took the Kotoku Fetish, Ekyere, to the five Kyebi ambassadors (negotiators) to "drink" it. This fetish was contained in a small brandy bottle, placed in a small brass pan and was carried in absolute silence among all those gathered there, as a sign of reverence to the Ekyere god. On reaching the Abuakwa negotiators the interpreter poured out some of the drink, set the toes of his left foot over those of the left foot on the person about to "drink" the fetish; he then orated, the gist of which was that if the drinker was not sincere but intended treachery, the fetish Ekyere should kill him. After this he poured again from the bottle into the mouth of the oath-taker and also over his head. In a similar

---

1. Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 5 January 1871 No. Akim 19 BMA-PJC.

manner, the five Kotoku peace negotiators drank the god Wankobabi, an Abuakwa fetish which was in a beer bottle. While the ceremony was going on the horns of the particular fetish would be intoning the praises of the god.<sup>1</sup> Even though the final peace settlement took place in 1870, it is reasonable to regard 1860 as marking the end of serious hostility between Abuakwa and Kotoku.

The 1860 war had far reaching effects on the British protecting power as well. The events compelled the administration of Governor Bullock Andrews to subject the provincial administration of the Eastern Districts to a rigid examination. For there was a belief in some sections of officialdom at Cape Coast Castle that the inefficiency of Mr. Freeman, as Civil Commandant, was largely responsible for the outbreak of the war in Akyem. In June 1860 Freeman was formally accused thus:

"to the manner in which you adjudicated the case between Atta Panin and Adjiman in 1857 must be attributed the present 1860 disturbances".<sup>2</sup>

He was also charged with "grossest irregularity in the mode of keeping ..... accounts".

Meticulous accounting does not appear to have been a virtue in Thomas Birch Freeman. Of mixed English and African parentage he had arrived in the Gold Coast in 1838, as a missionary of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission of England.<sup>3</sup> In June 1844 he had to return to England to

1. Lodholtz's Report of 5 January 1871.

2. Mr. Lindsey, Ag. Colonial Secretary (CCC) to Freeman, 2 June 1860 CO.96/48.

3. Harrison M. Wright's New Introduction to T. B. Freeman, Journal of Various Visits to the Kingdoms of Ashanti, Aku and Dahomi (1968 ed.) p. XI.

appear before the Committee of the Wesleyan Mission to answer a charge of financial mismanagement.<sup>1</sup> He returned to the Gold Coast but in 1857, gave up missionary work, and took up the post of Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts during C. C. Pine's governorship.

The Executive Council at Cape Coast Castle on 5th and 16th July 1860 sat as a Court to examine the two charges against Freeman. Prior to the sittings, Freeman had submitted a voluminous written defence refuting the two charges. In connection with the first charge, Kotokuhene Agyeman was invited from Western Akyem to the Castle to be a prosecution witness. Freeman ably refuted the charge of administrative incompetence. The Kotokuhene's testimony substantiated his arguments. He was therefore acquitted on that count. But he was found guilty on the second charge of financial irregularity and dismissed from the service.

The trial of Mr. Freeman emphasized the importance attached to the Akyem district by the British administration at Cape Coast Castle.

---

1. Freeman, Journal, p. XXXVIII.

## CHAPTER 8

### IMPACT OF KOTOKU PRESENCE IN WESTERN AKYEM

1860-1867

The emigration of the Kotoku from Eastern Akyem had far reaching effects on the Akyem themselves in particular and the Gold Coast in general. For example while it released the Abuakwa from the aversion they had hitherto had for the Christian Missionary enterprise, on account of Gyadam as a mission station, the migration led to the founding, by the Kotoku, of Nsuaem (later renamed Oda) and Nsawam, the one in Western Akyem and the other in extreme south-western Akuapem. Their presence in these two places enabled the Kotoku to influence, as from mid-1860, events in the Gold Coast on such scale and in such scope as they had never done before.

Rapid expansion of Christianity occurred in Eastern Akyem soon after the Kotoku emigration from the area. Since 1854 Gyadam, the Kotoku capital, had been serving as the Mission Station for the Christian enterprise in Akyem. However, the conversion rate had not been encouraging, because the Abuakwa who formed the bulk of the population in Eastern Akyem had shunned the enterprise on account of the selection of Gyadam, and not Kyebi their capital, as the mission station.<sup>1</sup> The Kotoku emigration and the subsequent destruction of Gyadam during the March 1860 war gave the missionaries a new opportunity to make a fresh start. They chose Kyebi as the new mission station,

---

1. Cf. Chapter 7 p. 234      above.

and went to settle there in early 1861.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is true to say that on the ashes of Gyadam grew the Basel Mission station at Kyebi.<sup>2</sup>

The removal to Kyebi was not without problems. Up to early 1858 when Atta Panin was the Abuakwahene prospects had been very bright, for he had given every indication to accord the enterprise royal patronage, if only the missionaries would choose Kyebi as the Mission Station. By 1860 this clear advantage which the enterprise could have enjoyed was no longer available, because Atta Panin had died in 1858. In 1861 some of the Missionaries regretted that the enterprise had missed such a golden opportunity.<sup>3</sup>

The regret was due not so much to the difficulties they started encountering in Kyebi as to the realisation that they had wasted much precious time by starting with Gyadam as the mission station. For even without the patronage of Atta Panin they still made rapid progress in the matter of conversion. By November 1861 they had made several converts and a Christian quarter was rapidly springing up in Kyebi; besides, evangelization in the surrounding towns and villages was well under way; towns like Tete, Pano, Apedwa, Nkronso, Wirenkyiren and Adadientam, all within less than ten miles radius from Kyebi, had received the 'Word'.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Stromberg's Report for the First Quarter of 1861, 28 May 1861 No. Akim 8; Kromer's Report, 26 May 1861 No. Akim 9; Station Conference Protocol, 26 June 1861 No. Akim 10; Stromberg to Basel, 30-31 July 1861 No. Akim 13; Kromer to Basel, 29 August 1861, No. Akim 14, BMA-PJC.

2. Reindorf, History, p. 221; Smith, The Presbyterian Church, p. 53.

3. Stromberg to Basel, 28 May 1861, No. Akim 8, BMA-PJC.

4. Stromberg's Report for the Third Quarter of 1861, dd. 1 November 1861 No. Akim 11, BMA-PJC.



The fundamental cause of this happy beginning seems to have been the indirect patronage of the Kyebi Court. Abuakwahene Atta Obiwom did not think of ever becoming a Christian himself even though the missionaries did him useful services, such as curing him of his illness, at least on one occasion.<sup>1</sup> All the same he showed personal interest in the welfare of the missionaries. He paid them occasional visits,<sup>2</sup> apparently to learn of their problems in relation to their residence in Kyebi. Consequently by May, 1867 when Obiwom died,<sup>3</sup> Christianity had made considerable progress in Kyebi and Kukurantumi at least, as evidenced by the following statistics:-

NO. OF CHURCH MEMBERS			SCHOOL POPULATION	
YEAR	KYEBI	KUKURANTUMI	KYEBI	KUKURANTUMI
1862	13	13	12-15	10-33
1863	13	-	15	6-17
1864	20-39	-	-	-
1865	25	12	14	13
1866	28	15	22 (3 were girls)	36-39
1867	35	12-26	23	7

Compared with the achievement at Gyadam for the period between

- 
1. Eischmid's Report for the 3rd Quarter of Year 1866.
  2. Eischmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 3rd November 1863 No. Akim 19 (BMA-PJC).
  3. Eischmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 17th May 1867, No. Akim 3, His Report for the year 1867 dd. 7th January 1868, Akim 8 (BMA-PJC) Mrs. Eischmid died in Kyebi in the same month and same year.

1854 and 1860<sup>1</sup> this record at Kyebi, and of course at Kukurantumi, is very impressive. The Kyebi achievement makes the false start at Gyadam even more glaring.

In about July 1867 the Abuakwa state selected the late Obiwom's successor. She was the elder of Obiwom's two sisters. Her name was Sekyiraa. Sekyiraa, however, declined the honour in favour of Kwasi Panin, the 14-year old son of her younger sister, Ampofoaa.<sup>2</sup> Kwasi Panin took the stool name of Amoako Atta (Amoako Atta I on the Abuakwa King List).<sup>3</sup>

Amoako Atta I reigned till 1888, with only a five-year break between 1880 and 1885. In 1878 he was accused of being an enemy of the missionaries and a barrier to propagation of Christianity in his kingdom.<sup>4</sup> The general feeling in the nineteenth century, and also in the early twentieth, was that this Abuakwahene was a persecutor of Christians. In fact the British Colonial Government in 1880 exiled him to Lagos, Nigeria, for five years, overtly for being found guilty of committing ritual murders, but

---

1. See Chapter 7 p.234 n. 1 above.

2. Eisenchmid's Report for 2nd Quarter of 1867, dd. 7 July, 1867 No. Akim 4 (BMA-PJC).

3. Reindorf's dating of 1866 as marking the beginning of this reign is wrong, and so is of course that of Noel Smith. (Cf. Reindorf, History, Appx. Cp.348 and Noel Smith op. cit. p.116).

4. Buck's Report for the year 1878, dd. 29-31st December, 1878 No. 222, BMA-PJC; O. Schott, Retrospect on Fifty Years of Mission Work (Basel 1879) p.35 cited by Noel Smith, op. cit. p. 53 n. 5.

covertly for allegedly persecuting Christians in Kyebi.<sup>1</sup>

This chief has been unfairly dealt with.

The charge that he was an enemy of missionary work pre-supposes that he hindered the progress of the Christian enterprise in his Kingdom. Contemporary evidence shows otherwise. Statistics relating to the growth of the church in Kyebi and Kukurantumi up to 1878 when his so-called conflict with Kyebi Christians reached its climax are the best measure:

NO. OF CHURCH MEMBERS			SCHOOL POPULATION	
YEAR	KYEBI	KUKURANTUMI	KYEBI	KUKURANTUMI
1868	42	20	31	6
1869	37	11	38 (28 boys) (10 girls)	-
1870	34	13	20 (boys)	-
1871	-	-	24	-
1872	10	-	-	-
1873	32-35	14-15	23	-
1874	31	12	22	5
1875	14	24	-	-
1876	56	36	44	18
1877	108	57	49	23
1878	-	-	-	-

---

1. Eisenchmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 28th May, 1880 No. 4; Buck to Basel, 2nd March, 1880; No. 129; Deiterle to Basel, 12th February 1880 No. 1 Eisenchmid to Basel, 5th April 1880 No. 2, Buck's Report on the "Kibi Anstalt", 28th July 1880 No. 146; Preiswerk (Accra) to Basel ? November, 1880 No. 125 (BMA-PJC). There is, however, the view, implied by Agbadeka, that Amoaka Atta was exiled for refusing to heed Government orders not to expand his influence over Akyem Kotoku and Juaben and also to prevent the latter, who, as from 1875, were refugees in Abuakwa "from collecting arms in Abuakwa". Cf. African Politics, p. 108.

At least the figures for Kyebi show a very remarkable progress far outshining the achievement of the Church during the Obiwom period. Besides, by 1878, 'The Word' had reached much of Eastern Akyem (Abuakwa) and had even made an incursion into Western Akyem where there were many Abuakwa towns also. So pleased was the missionary personnel at Kyebi that in 1877 it declared hopefully that the great moment of the enterprise had arrived.<sup>1</sup> The declaration was sincere. For the Word had reached many an Akyem Abuakwa town more than twenty miles removed from Kyebi. Among such towns were Begoro, Abomosu and Asunafo.

Nor did Amoako Atta show any lack of personal interest in the welfare of the missionaries. Like his immediate predecessor, Atta Obiwom, he would not become a Christian himself, as Buganda Chiefs were wont to do, but he showed personal interest in the welfare and work of the missionaries. In 1868 while his elders showed apathy, the Abuakwahene personally took it upon himself to investigate the theft of money belonging to the missionaries, stolen while it was in transit from Akropon, (Akuapem) to Kyebi. He walked to Apedwa, about eight miles away, to do this investigation; the money was recovered largely through his efforts.<sup>2</sup> David Asante in 1873 and Mader in 1875, both active missionaries at the Kyebi Mission Station, had reason to comment on the friendliness of Amoako Atta, adding that

---

1. David Asante's Report for the 2nd Quarter of 1877, dd. 9th July 1877 No. 236 BMA-PJC.

2. Eisenchmid's Report for 3rd Quarter of 1868, dd. 3rd October 1868 No. Akim 10, BMA-PJC.

the real culprits of any hostility against Christians in Kyebi were the aristocracy (the elders who were the King's Councillors).<sup>1</sup>

However, there can be no doubt about the fact that there were occasions when Amoako Atta seems to have joined the aristocracy in their hostility towards the missionaries and their work, not on grounds of religion but politics. He and the aristocracy felt the Church was trying to usurp the political powers of the State. The case of Sakyi illustrates this point. At the end of 1869 a Kyebi citizen called Sakyi became a convert and received baptism. On grounds of conversion to Christianity Sakyi, an Okyerema (drummer) in the Asafo Company of Kyebi, refused to play the drums again. He was arraigned before Amoako Atta by the Asafohene and other members, and fined two sheep, valued at (£16.00 sterling), for becoming a Christian without the prior approval of the Kyebi Asafo Company and refusing to perform his duty to the State. The Christian community then took up Sakyi's fight by insisting on freedom of worship. Ultimately both the Christians and Elders agreed that missionaries should always seek the permission of the Abusua-panin (head of extended family) of any freeman, or the owner of any slave, who wanted to embrace Christianity.<sup>2</sup> According to Lodholtz, the next day when the Christians went to the palace with a draft agreement to be assented to by the Elders,

- 
1. Asante's Report for 3rd Quarter of 1873, dd. 8th October, 1873 No. Akim 22; Mader to Basel, 21st April, 1875 No. 182, BMA-PJC.
  2. Lodholtz's Report for 1st Quarter of 1870, dd. 28th April 1870. No. Akim 5.

none of them turned up; besides they later met one of the Elders called Kwasi Amoako who openly boasted that he would never allow any of his relatives and slaves to become Christians, adding that he hated the "Word of God".<sup>1</sup> The truth was that Christianity was taking away the converts from continued performance of their social and political obligations. This is fundamentally the point which King Amoako Atta, in connection with the Sakyi affair, no doubt wanted to emphasize when he somewhat emotionally declared:

"Must I let my horn-blowers, my drummers, my hammock-carriers etc. become Christians? If I do, then I can no longer carry out my .... ceremonies, nor can I receive foreign embassies worthily. Whoever has an obligation to serve me will never be allowed to become a Christian."<sup>2</sup>

The conduct of David Asante provides another illustration of the clash between Church and State. In 1873 the Abuakwaahene and his people allegedly opposed the stationing of David Asante as a Catechist at Kyebi. Asante had been the Catechist for the Begoro station and was now transferred to Kyebi. David Asante, son of one of the Akuapem Kings, did not limit himself to Church matters. He was known to be of a firm character and bold in taking people to task on any misdemeanor, be they Christians or not, Kings or Councillors or ordinary members of the Akbuakwa citizenry. For almost five years he lived in Kyebi. His presence in the Abuakwa capital was the fundamental cause of the so-called Amoakoan persecution.<sup>3</sup> In fact it was against him that Amoako Atta directed his hostility, not against the enterprise as such. If he had hated Christianity as such, he would not have allowed the religion to become so entrenched in his Kingdom as to enable the missionaries in Kyebi to reach, by the

---

1. Lodholtz's Report for 1st Quarter of 1870, dd. 28 April 1870. No. Akim 5.

2. Ibid.

3. This theme falls outside the scope of this study. Mr. R. Addo Fening of the History Department, University of Ghana, Legon, is currently engaged in the study of Abuakwa History from 1875. It is hoped that he will include the Amoakoan persecution as a theme in his work.

1870s, Western Akyem where the Kotoku went to settle after the 1860 war.

The Kotoku migration to and settlement in western Akyem were not without problems. The war of 1860 had generated differences between Agyeman, the Kotokuhene, and Dompri, his Ankobeahene. The cause was what Agyeman considered to be a most unpardonable offence committed by Dompri during the war with Abuakwa. Dompri, as already noted in the previous chapter, was one of the Kotoku captains in the 1860 war with Abuakwa. He is said to have had a good opportunity to kill the Abuakwahene and some of his followers but refrained from doing so on grounds of clan ties.<sup>1</sup> The Abuakwahene belonged to the Asona clan, just like Dompri. The Kotoku war Chief felt he would have committed fratricide had he killed the Abuakwahene.<sup>2</sup> The Kotokuhene who was of the Agona clan, on the other hand, thought that in the circumstances of war, Dompri should have allowed Kotoku political and military interests to take precedence over abusua obligations, by killing the number one enemy of Kotoku. With this frame of mind Agyeman refused to include Dompri when honouring his war chiefs after their arrival in western Akyem.<sup>3</sup> Dompri's reaction was sharp and unequivocal. He immediately left western Akyem altogether with his subjects to found Nsawam on

---

1. AKT: Adoagyiri: (1968/69).

2. It is significant to note that even today the Abuakwahene is looked upon as head of those who belong to Asona irrespective of where they hail from. (Personal communication from the Adontenhene of Kukurantumi).

3. AKT: Adoagyiri (1968/9).

Akuapem soil.<sup>1</sup>

In the prevailing conditions the rift between the ruling lineage and its Ankobea was unfortunate for the whole tribe. Domppe's subsequent exploits marked him out as a genius of a military leader. He must have contributed very significantly to the success of Kotoku arms against Abuakwa in 1860. Agyeman could have dealt with him more diplomatically and retained his military services. For even in western Akyem there was no absolute safety for the Kotoku. Kyebi continued to be truculent,<sup>2</sup> and Kumasi, was nursing hatred against them. Kyebi or Kumasi could attack at any moment. But there it was: Domppe left with his subjects and the rest of the Kotoku had to fend for themselves as best they could in western Akyem.

A major problem Agyeman had to solve was how and where to establish a home in Western Akyem. Clan ties with Bosome had indeed partly motivated his migration to that place, where Captain de Ruvignes found them in April 1860, as guests of the Bosome ruling house at Soaduro.<sup>3</sup> Thus tradition is absolutely right in asserting that

"after the war between Akim-Kotoku and Akim Abuakwa in the middle of the 19th century the Omanhene of Akim-Kotoku left Jyadem Gyadam in Eastern Akim and sought another site. The Stool of Akim-Bosome was already established at Akim Swedru in Western Akim ..... This stool, like the Kotoku stool, is of the Agona clan, and for clan-ship's sake the Omanhene of Bosome gave sanctuary to these homeless kinsmen in her town ....."<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. The founding of Nsawam and its impact on the Gold Coast are fully discussed in Chapter 9 below.
  2. Cf. Chapter 7 p. 254 above.
  3. Captain de Ruvignes (Soaduro) to Governor Andrews (CCO), 5th May; Alphonso Cary (CCC) to de Ruvigne (Soaduro), 8th May 1860, CO 96/47.
  4. Kotoku tradition, as recorded by M. J. Field, Akim-Kotoku p. 37.



The Bosomehene at that time was a woman, called Amoakooa. By giving sanctuary to the Kotoku migrants, the Bosome ruling house were fulfilling one of the obligations of the clan system, namely that all those belonging to the same clan should assist one another in times of difficulty, irrespective of tribal, political and economic affiliations.<sup>1</sup> To Amoakooa Kofi Agyeman was more than a clansman. Between 1812 and 1825 Agyeman and some of his close relatives had lived with the Bosome royal house, first in Asante, and then in or about 1824 at Soaduro, in Western Akyem. In fact it was from there that he was recalled to Gyadam in Eastern Akyem in or about 1825 to be enstooled as Kotokuhene.<sup>2</sup> Finally there was one other reason why the Bosomehene should care for Agyeman and his subjects. Apparently due to the close connection between the Kotoku and Bosome ruling lineages, Abuakwa in 1855-1857 had extended to Bosome its economic sanctions against Kotoku.<sup>3</sup> In 1860 Obiwom almost renewed Abuakwa aggression against Bosome when he ordered his Western-most subjects of "Ackiasi" (Akyease), living only five miles west of Soaduro, to attack Agyeman at Soaduro. Akyease however disobeyed the order because "Adjiman has secret friends amongst Attah's people".<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Compare with Boahen's assertion that "clan membership .... completely cut across tribal and political boundaries". Cf. Ajayi and Espie (ed.), A Thousand Years in West African History, p. 161.
  2. See Chapter 5 p. 194      above.
  3. See Chapter 7 p. 235      above.
  4. Captain de Ruvignes (Soaduro) to Governor Andrews (CCC) 5 May 1860 CO.96/47.

Permanent residence in Western Akyem was the object of the migrants. Agyeman's problem, however, was how to get land to settle on. The Bosome could not play host to him indefinitely in spite of the clan ties. Nor could they give him land to settle on. The Bosome themselves did not possess 'surplus' territory part of which they could give to their newly arrived kinsmen. Consequently Amoakooa assisted Agyeman to solve the problem by approaching the Wankyihehene, head of the Oseawu Division of Abuakwa, as well as other Abuakwa towns in Western Akyem such as Apori, who readily obliged.<sup>1</sup> It appears that the Kotoku obtained the land between June 1860 and 1863 for in 1863 the Abuakwahene claimed as falling within his jurisdiction the land on which Agyeman had settled in Western Akyem.<sup>2</sup> Apparently Wankyi and all other Abuakwa towns who made the land grants to the Kotoku migrants did not consult, much less seek approval, of the Kyebi Court. This is not to suggest that Obiwom could have stopped the grant had he been consulted. The grant merely emphasized the weakness of the Kyebi Court in the matter of land ownership in Akyem.<sup>3</sup>

In Western Akyem, Agyeman founded a new home and called it Nsuaem (The Slice), apparently in gratitude to the Wankyi of Abuakwa who granted him the site. Today the town is called Oda. The change of name is said to have

---

1. AAT: Wankyi (1925/6); Ameyaw, Oda Tradition (Legon 1963).  
AKT: Awisa & Nkwanta (1968/9); ABT: Soaduro (1968/9).

2. Kromer (Kyebi) to Basel, 1 November 1863 No. Akim 18 (BMA-PJC).

3. This subject is discussed fully in Appendix A, pp. 363-374 below.

occurred at the beginning of the present century.<sup>1</sup> This may well be true. But the Kotoku occasionally called Nsuaem Oda as early as the 1870s.<sup>2</sup> Other towns founded by the Kotoku migrants included Nkwanta, Asene and Asuboa, all few miles away from Nsuaem (Oda). Thus the founding and crystalization of the Akyem Kotoku state, as it is today, was a direct outcome of the 1860 war with Abuakwa.

The arrival of the migrants from eastern Akyem (Abuakwa) created ethnographic, social and political problems in western Akyem. Naturally the population of the district increased in variety and size, though by how much it is difficult to say. The area became relatively overcrowded as the Kotoku immigrants founded towns and villages cheek by jowl with existing Abuakwa, Bosome and stateless Atwea towns.<sup>3</sup> The result was, and still is, that towns belonging to the three Akyem states are so mixed up that it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to draw clear territorial boundaries between them.<sup>4</sup> While it is absolutely correct to call eastern Akyem Abuakwa, western Akyem does not yield to such an easy definition; it consists of Abuakwa, Bosome and Kotoku territory.<sup>5</sup>

---

1. Ameyaw, Oda (Kotoku) Tradition. The change was to put an end to confusion between Nsuaem and Nsawam.

2. See Chapter 10 p. 345 n. 3 below.

3. Ameyaw, Oda Tradition; AKT: Awisa (1968/69).

4. Field, Akim-Kotoku, pp. 2-3; also the map at the back of her book; Cf.

5. See Map. 1.

This situation appears to have given rise to the practice of transferring loyalties and allegiances from one stool to another. For example Kotoku gained Ayirebi, Apaso, Anyinam, Abenase, and possibly other towns, which had earlier belonged to either Bosome or Abuakwa. Kotoku also received new members from the Atwea group of towns which had belonged to neither Abuakwa nor Bosome.<sup>1</sup> The Kotoku stool was, however, not always at the receiving end.<sup>2</sup> But it would seem that transfer to, rather than from, Kotoku was the general rule. For in less than ten years after arriving in the area the Kotokuhene was referred to as "the King of Western Akim".<sup>3</sup>

The Kotoku paid a price for this tremendous achievement in western Akyem. By the 1870s the predominance of the ruling lineage in the area had created tension between them and the Bosome, who in 1860 were so kind as to provide them with shelter. Captain Butler noted the tension during the British invasion of Asante in 1874, when Nsuaem and Soaduro disputed over Awisa.<sup>4</sup> This town was situated between Nsuaem and Soaduro. Kwabena Ahenkora was then the Chief of Awisa. "This chief", observed Butler, "owed a kind of divided allegiance, on the one hand to Quabina Fuah /King

---

1. Ameyaw, Oda Tradition.

2. Field Akim-Kotoku pp. 53-63; Danquah (1929) p. 32.

3. Horton, West African Countries, pp. 132-133.

4. Butler, Akimfoo: A History of a Failure (London 1874) p. 179.

of Kotoku], on the other hand to Coffee Ahenkora [King of Bosome]. Fuah had sent to summon him to Insuaim with all his men to march under the banner of West Akim to the war [British invasion of Asante]. But Cobra, doubtless thinking that he might altogether escape service in the field, pleaded that to Coffee Ahencora, and not to Quabinah Fuah, was his fealty, if any due, and declined to obey the summons from Insuaim. Upon this Fuah had declared that he would go to war with Awisa if the refusal was persisted in. With the rifles and ammunition he had received for service against the Ashantis, he [Fuah] would, it was averred, soon carry destruction into the hamlet of Cobra Ahencora. Hence the alarm at Swaidroo, for Awisa lay only a mile distant [from Soaduro]."<sup>1</sup> Butler, however, managed to get Kwabena Fua and Kofi Ahenkora to sink their differences for the success of the impending attack on Asante.<sup>2</sup>

By far the greatest price Kotoku paid for their presence and achievement in Western-Akyem was increased tension with Asante. In fact Asante invaded Western Akyem in 1863 with a view to punishing Kotoku and their Bosome allies for thwarting Kumasi political ambition and economic aspirations.

Hitherto this invasion has been looked upon as

- 
1. Butler, Akimfoo p. 183. Awisa is barely five miles from Oda (Nsuem).
  2. The Akyem involvement in the 1874 British invasion of Asante is fully discussed in Chapter 10 below.

directed against the British.<sup>1</sup> This view needs careful but concise examination because it has prevailed to this day.

The main source of this wrong notion was the existence, at the time of the war, of an Anglo-Asante quarrel and the use Asante made of the quarrel to deceive the British on the cause and object of the attack. Immediately before the invasion there had been differences between the British at Cape Coast Castle and the Asantehene over the extradition of two Asante fugitives from the Protectorate. The request was made by the Asante monarch. One of the fugitives was a slave boy and the other an Asante Chief called Gyani.<sup>2</sup> Gyani had violated a financial law of Asante, and to skip justice, had fled into the Protectorate.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the invasion, he was residing in Denkyera. But while on his way to the south he and the runaway slave-boy are said to have been sheltered by the Kotokuhene.<sup>4</sup> This is doubtful. Agyeman could well have done this if the fugitives arrived in the Protectorate

1. J.A.B. Horton, Letters, pp. 52-57; Ellis (1893), Chapter XVIII; Claridge, Vol.1 pp. 502-03; Fuller, op. cit. p. 91 Rev. W. T. Balmer, A History of the Akan Peoples (London, 1924) pp. 141-142; Ward, History, p. 199; Kimble, op. cit. p. 199; F. Agbodeka, African Politics and British Policy on the Gold Coast, 1869-1900 (Nup. 1971) p. 16; A.A. Boahen, in Ajayi & Crowder, Vol. Two., pp.224-227, Wilks (Asante, pp. 219-222) is not certain who the war was against, the British or the Akyem Kotoku, though he says the main force of the Asante army attacked Kotoku and not the British at Cape Coast. He seems to lean towards the conventional view.
2. The name is variously given as "Janin" (in the contemporary records), Jenin, Gainie, Ganin etc. in the secondary source.
3. The law stipulated that anybody who discovered a gold nugget or nuggets should surrender same to the King's treasury. Its violation carried death penalty.
4. Claridge, Vol. 1 p. 517. Ward, History, p.215. Wilks, Asante, p.221, citing Despatches from the Governor of the Gold Coast, explaining the cause of war with the King of Ashante (PP: Accounts & Papers, LXV).

via Western Akyem after May 1860 when the Kotoku ruling house themselves settled in the area from Eastern Akyem. But one report in 1863 said Chief Gyani with eight hundred followers had "left Ashantee several years ago."<sup>1</sup>

Barely two months after Richard Pine's assumption of the governorship of Cape Coast Castle in October, 1862, the Asantehene applied to him to extradite Gyani, as well as the runaway slave boy, back to Asante in order to face justice. There was the possibility of their being executed as soon as they set foot on Asante, even though the Asantehene promised to spare their lives. On humanitarian grounds, therefore, Governor Pine refused to send them back to Asante.<sup>2</sup> In February 1863, the Asantehene renewed his application by sending down a high-powered delegation to Cape Coast Castle to re-state his case, but Pine remained adamant. A month later the Asante army invaded the Protectorate. It is thus easy to see why since the 1860s many observers have been inclined to regard the extradition dispute as the cause of the attack.

But this view has two major weaknesses. The first is that the manoeuvres of the Asante invading army show unmistakeably that the British at Cape Coast Castle were not the object of attack. Secondly the view contradicts what the Asante themselves gave out in and after 1863

---

1. Report by Commodore Wilmot, ? April 1863, Br. PP. 1864 (3364), Vol. XLI, p. 21.

2. Richard Pine (CCC) to the Duke of Newcastle, 10 December 1862, CO.96/58; Metcalfe, Documents, No. 230, pp. 291-2.

as the causes of the invasion, namely strained relations with Kotoku. Let us examine the first point. The general opinion is that the invading Asante army adopted a three-point attack. Horton seems to have been the first writer to popularise this view. Commenting on the manoeuvres of the 30,000 strong invading army, Horton in 1869 said that

"the smallest division of about 2,000 was sent to the boundary of Warsaw Wassa on the west of Cape Coast with orders to avoid, as much as possible, any general engagement with the enemy, but keep the Warsaws and Denkeras in check and prevent them from joining the Fante force. The second division, consisting of about 8,000 descended, after crossing the Praah River Pra on the main road to Cape Coast, pushed rapidly into the middle of the country as far as it was safe, avoiding engagement with a superior force. The third and main body 20,000 under the personal command of Prince Osoo Cokkor Owusu Kokoo marched on the eastern Fante and western Akim, the most powerful and warlike people in the Protectorate, forcing everything before them ....."<sup>1</sup>

If indeed Cape Coast Castle was the target of the invaders, and their aim was apparently to punish Governor Pine for his intransigence, then it should be absurd for the Asante-hene to send only 8,000 soldiers against the Cape Coast district and 2,000 against Wassa and Denkyera, where Gyani had taken shelter, and 20,000 against the eastern Fante (by which term Horton clearly meant the Agona) and the western Akyem, living some fifty miles away, to the north-west of Cape Coast. Ward detected this absurdity but explained it thus:

---

1. Horton, Letters (1970 ed.) pp. 52-53. Other sources put the strength of the Asante army much higher, 60,000. Cf. The African Times, cited by Wilks, Asante, p. 221 n. 66.



"On this occasion the eastern most column of the Asante army<sup>1</sup> was the strongest. This was apparently because Ashanti had a subsidiary object in the capture of Akim Kotokuhene Agyeman. Agyeman had sheltered the two fugitives on their way to the coast, and had returned an insulting answer when called on to surrender them."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to imagine that an intelligent people like the Asante would send the strongest section of their army to chase after a subsidiary object and allow the principal one, the British at Cape Coast Castle and Gyani in Denkyera, to get away with it by sending against them only 12,000 who, if we are to believe Horton, were to avoid a superior force. Even if the British at Cape Coast were weak, surely the Assin and the Central Fante were there to offer a stiff resistance. Besides, their awareness of British military superiority, the geographical position of the Assin states, and the central Fante would no doubt make Asante send a much stronger force against Assin and Central Fante.

The truth was that "the whole war", as Captain Brownwell put it in April, 1863, "is against King Argiman Agyeman and the Queen."<sup>2</sup> The Queen in question was Amma Amoakooa, the woman Akyem Bosomhene who was then an ally of Kotoku. Two months after Brownwell's report, the Asante themselves left Cape Coast Castle authorities in no doubt as to whom they were fighting against. In May, 1863 Prince

---

1. Ward, History, p. 215. But see his note 13 on the same page.

2. Captain Brownwell (Agona Swedru) to Major Cochrane (Anomabo), 1st April 1863 CO/96/61.

Owusu Ansa<sup>1</sup> was sent by Governor Pine to the Asante war camp to inquire from commander Owusu Kokoo whom the Asante were fighting against and why. On June 1, 1863 Owusu Ansa reported back that the war was against Akyem Kotoku.<sup>2</sup> Writing a day after Ansa's report, the Asantehene himself confirmed Ansa's view. He queried Governor Pine as to why the British and the Fante were fighting against his army because Asante was at war with neither the British nor Fante, but with Akyem Kotoku.<sup>3</sup> In Kotoku-Asante relations, therefore, must be sought the cause, or causes, of the 1863 war.

Ever since 1860 relations between Kotoku and Asante had never been cordial. The Asantehene in 1863 was still smarting under the defeat/<sup>which</sup> Kotoku inflicted on the Abuakwa-Asante Alliance in 1860. He made no secret about this as a remote cause of the 1863 war. He opened his letter of 2nd June 1863, already referred to, thus:

- 
1. J. O. Ansa was one of the two hostages the Asante gave to the British to back their word during the signing of the 1831 Treaty of Peace. With the other hostage, Owusu Nkwantabisa, Owusu Ansa was sent to London and educated at Clapham. The two returned to the Gold Coast in or about 1841. Nkwantabisa died soon after. Owusu Ansa was not allowed to return to Kumasi but was employed at Cape Coast Castle. His mission to the Asante war camp, Gyadam, on the Birem, near Akyem Soaduro, was the result of his own request to Governor Pine to be allowed to go and interview his countrymen, as no one then knew for certain whom the Asante were fighting. For a detailed biography of Owusu Ansa see Wilks, Asante, especially Chapter 14.
  2. Prince Owusu Ansa ("Gyadam - upon - Birim") to Governor Pine, 1 June 1863, CO.96/61.
  3. Asantehene Kwaku Dua to H. E. Governor Pine, 2nd June 1863 CO.96/61.

"I should like to inform my friend [Governor Pine] about the case of Akim Argieman Inkantoe and Attah who fought some time ago, and at that time one man of mine named Ardarquar of Kokofoo was killed."

Then in a long winded way the Asantehene went on to say how he appealed to Mr. Andrews, Governor of Cape Coast Castle at that time, for justice to be done him, but the governor refused to redress his grievance.<sup>1</sup> This then was one remote cause of the war. Another was perhaps the Kotoku migration to western Akyem. It is possible that Kumasi saw the migration as the first phase of a secret Kotoku plan to return to Asante-Akyem. Nsuaem, the new Kotoku capital in western Akyem was much nearer to Asante-Akyem than Gyadam, their former capital, in Eastern Akyem (Abuakwa). Yet another remote grievance against Kotoku, (although the Asantehene made no mention of it in 1863) is also traceable to 1860. It had something to do with a Kotoku citizen who in July, 1860 beat an Asante priest called Busumuru at Anomabo. Some Asante traders had gone to trade at Anomabo. They put up in the house of the gold-taker<sup>2</sup> of a Mr. Butler, an English merchant there. It was about this time that Kotokuhene Agyeman was invited to Cape Coast as a prosecution witness in the Freeman trial.<sup>3</sup> On his way back home some of his subjects, including his interpreter, went to the gold-taker's house. Six Asante traders, including Busumuru,

---

1. See Chapter 7 pages 248-<sup>254</sup> above for an account of the Abuakwa-Kotoku war of 1860 and the Asante involvement.

2. A gold-taker was a kind of middle-man in the gold trade between the forest and the coast. He introduced to the merchants the producers who came to the coast to sell gold.

3. See Chapter 7 page 256-7 above.

were already in the house. As soon as the Kotoku entered the house, Busumuru shouted: "Who comes there, is that crook-legged Argiman's interpreter?"<sup>1</sup> One of the Kotoku who could not bear to see his King insulted in this manner, grabbed the priest and beat him. Busumuru's companions saw how impetuous their colleague had been and what the consequence might be should the Kotoku citizens report the incident to their King. To induce the Kotoku not to report the incident to their King, Busumuru's colleagues gave the Kotoku  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ackies of gold.<sup>2</sup> When Busumuru and his colleagues returned home to tell their own story the Asantehene took up the matter and complained to Governor Andrews about the beating of his priest by Kotoku subjects. The Committee of Enquiry at Anomabo was the action Andrews took on the Asantehene's complaint. The committee found the Kotoku not guilty because they had been extremely provoked. After studying the report of the Committee, Governor Andrews informed the Asantehene that the conduct of Busumuru had been extremely provocative and therefore he deserved the beating.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently the Asantehene saw that Andrews was a fair and firm man who could not be easily pushed about. He decided to wait for a more suitable occasion to retaliate against the Kotoku. By November, 1860 he was exuberantly

---

1. Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Asante grievance against Kotoku: "Evidence from the gold-taker of Mr. Butler on Oath at Anomabo" 13th August, 1860 CO.96/47.

2. Ibid.

3. Andrews to the Duke of Newcastle, 13 December 1860 CO.96/47.

professing friendship with the British. In that month he sent a live hog to Andrews with the following message :-

"My friend, I send this [letter] to you to tell you plainly to send this nice hog called sanker [osanka in Twi] to the Queen of England as a present [from me]. I am well, hoping that you are the same."<sup>1</sup>

But it is clear that in 1860 while Kumasi was professing friendship with the British, it was nursing bitterness against Kotoku, a British protected state.

Tension between Kotoku and Asante continued during 1861-62 and thereby made it possible for Kumasi to secure an immediate cause for attacking Nsuaem. Some time between 1861 and 1862 the Kotokuhene ordered his subjects to tattoo an Asante citizen on the face. The Basel missionaries at Kyebi thought this was the immediate cause of the 1863 Asante attack on Kotoku.<sup>2</sup> The missionaries may well be right, judging from what the Asante themselves gave out as their immediate grievance against Kotoku, namely the seizure and murder of a number of Asante subjects by the Kotoku. On 1st June, 1863 the Officer commanding the Asante army was quoted as saying that the Kotokuhene ordered the detention and execution of sixty Asante subjects in his territory; and this angered the Asantehene who instructed his army to attack and kill Agyeman.<sup>3</sup> The Asantehene himself essentially confirmed the statement of his Commanding Officer. In his letter of 2nd June, 1863, already referred to above, the

1. Asantehene Kwaku Dua I to Governor Andrews (CCC) 20th November, 1860, CO.96/47.

2. Stromberg (Kyebi) <sup>to Basel</sup> 5th April, 1863 No. Akim 18, BMA-PJC.

3. Owusu Ansa (Gyadam-upon-Birem) to Governor Pine, 1 & 2 June 1863, CO.96/61.

Asantehene, commenting on the immediate cause of the invasion also said: "Argieman Inkantoe caught sixty of them [Asante citizens], killed 40 [of them] and delivered twenty to me; therefore I sent my chief captain Osoo Korkor to [go and] kill him and bring his jaw- [bone]". Clearly the presence of the Kotoku paramountcy in western Akyem had added fuel to the tension already existing between it and Asante. It seems that in Western Akeym the Kotoku were in the habit of not only panyarring but also killing Asante subjects.

The 1831 Treaty of Peace had anticipated dispute between some of the Protectorate states and Asante, and had laid down the procedure to normalise relations in the event of tension. The Treaty was still in force in the early 1860s. Clause 5 of the 1827 section of the Treaty stipulated that whenever any of the Protectorate states offended Asante, the Kumasi Court should first complain to the Governor or any official empowered to act for the governor, who would settle the issue as justice required. Asked why the Asantehene did not lodge a complaint with the Governor against Kotoku before attacking that state, the Commander-in-Chief of the Asante Army said the Asantehene feared that if he had complained to Cape Coast Castle, "he would be served as before".<sup>1</sup> Owusu Kokoo was here no doubt referring to Governor Andrews' refusal to entertain Asante grievance (in the Adarkwa and Busumuru affairs) against Kotoku in 1860. Much has been made of the claim, attributed to Asantehene Osei Bonsu (c. 1801-1824) that Asante never went to war to

---

1. Ansa's Report of 1st June, 1863.

obtain justice "while a path lay open for negotiation."<sup>1</sup> If indeed this was a general maxim of Asante, then its conduct in 1863 was an exception to the rule, because it did not complain against Kotoku before attacking that state.

By March 1863 the Asante army had arrived in Western Akyem. It apparently took Kotoku and its Bosome ally unawares. This can be inferred from Agyeman's message to the government. For the information of Mr. Nicol Irwine, the acting Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, a Mr. Parker of Simpa (Winneba) observed on 16th March that according to the Kotokuhene "the Ashantees have come to his town and are ready to fight, which gives him no chance to have it fair with them from the way they have surrounded his town; but as soon as he finds chance he will fire on them".<sup>2</sup> The 'surprise' tactics which the invading Asante army adopted seems to suggest their respect for Kotoku as a fighting nation. Asante no doubt well remembered Kotoku ability to hold its own against the combined efforts of Abuakwa and Asante in 1860. The 1863 Asante war planners probably worked on the principle that a surprise attack on Kotoku was more likely to bring about its quicker defeat.

The course and outcome of the war are other aspects where earlier writers have distorted truth. The impression is given that the invading Asante army swept everything before it, winning victory in two major battles of the war fought at Asikuma and Bobikuma, and withdrawing with impunity only at

---

A Residence,

1. Dupuis, / pp. 225-6; Wilks, in Forde and Kaberry, op. cit. p. 218. Cf. also Boahen, Topics, p. 79.
2. Mr. Parker (Winneba) to Irwine (Accra), 16 March 1863, CO.96/61.

the approach of the rains.<sup>1</sup> This is not borne out by contemporary evidence. In the first place there were three, and not two, major battles. Nor is it correct to say that only the rainy season forced the invader to withdraw. Defeat in the three battles, and the possibility of further debacles were weightier reasons for the withdrawal.

The immediate problem which Agyeman and Amoakooa had to solve was how to extricate themselves from the spider's web the invaders had almost woven around them. A way of escape lay to the south. And so they and their subjects retreated southwards, into neighbouring Gomoa and Agona. The retreat gave them a breathing space to work out their war plans. It, however, had one great disadvantage. It left their Kingdoms unprotected. This enabled the invaders to loot and burn down about thirty Kotoku and Bosome towns.<sup>2</sup> This initial success was about all that the Asante army achieved.

Gomoa and Agona readily rallied to the aid of the retreating Akyem, allowing them to establish their main camp at Agona Swedru. In set battles the Protectorate states which actually fought against the Asante in 1863 were Kotoku, Bosome, Agona and Gomoa.<sup>3</sup> In the last days of March Kotoku and their allies met the invaders at Asikuma, where the first major battle was fought. Earlier accounts claim that victory

---

1. Ellis (1893) p. 228; Claridge Vol. I p. 515; Ward, History pp. 215-6; Wilks, Asante, p. 221.

2. Pine to Newcastle, 10th June, 1863 CO.96/61.

3. The term 'allies' as used in this study therefore refers primarily to these Protectorate states.



went to the invaders.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary evidence tells a different story. According to Captain Brownwell who arrived at Swedru a day after the battle, the allies won the day. They captured many Asante soldiers during and after the battle. These prisoners-of-war gave the allies information on the situation in the Asante war camp after the Battle of Asikuma. They said at the beginning of the war the Asante army numbered many thousands though they could not tell the exact number. Besides Owusu Kokoo, there were many other captains, including "Adarquar" (Adaakwa), "Samaquanta" (Asamoa Nkwanta), "Eddoo Guaffooah" (? Adu Bofoo), "Yah Mannee" (Yaw Omane), and "Koyah" (Keya); that Adaakwa and Keya and several lesser captains were killed at Asikuma; the Asante losses at Asikuma were so great that the Asantehene had sent word to Owusu Kokoo to curtail the war and bring the remnant of the army back home; that all were agreed to obey the royal order except Owusu Kokoo who said he would not return home until he had either killed or captured Agyeman.<sup>2</sup>

The second battle was fought at Bobikuma in or about the second week of April. Again earlier writers credit Asante with victory. This view is not borne out by contemporary evidence. Before Bobikuma was fought, Major

---

1. Ellis (1863) p. 228 Claridge Vol. I p. 515; Ward History p. 215.

2. Captain Brownwell (Agona Swedru) to Major Cochrane (Anomabo), 1 April 1863, Nos. 1 & 2, CO.96/61. Brownwell had been sent to study the situation in the Winneba neighbourhood. He arrived at Swedru in the morning of 1st April, a day after the Battle of Asikuma. He immediately sent a report to Major Cochrane, Commanding the small force at the castle. He sent his second report in the evening of the same day.

Cochrane had sent an order asking Brownwell to leave the allies' camp and retire to Winneba.<sup>1</sup> Captain Brownwell obeyed. While at Winneba he received word about the Battle of Bobikuma. The information said the Allies had won another victory.<sup>2</sup>

There was a third battle, which has never been mentioned in any of the earlier accounts of the war. It was fought near Nsaba on 1st May 1863. By then Captain Brownwell had realised the incompetence of Cochrane as a commander. He defied the Major's order to stay at Winneba; and went to join the Allies just before the Battle of Nsaba. He was thus not only an eye-witness but an active participant in the war. Again victory went to the Allies.<sup>3</sup> Thus in all three set battles, the invaders suffered defeats.

The false impression that the war had gone against the Protectorate is explained by the poor handling of the situation by both Governor Pine, at least during the initial

- 
1. See pp. 287-8 below for account on Major Cochrane's conduct and movements during the war.
  2. Captain Brownwell (Winneba) to Cochrane, 13th April, 1863 CO.96/61 Horton (Letters p. 62) says this war occurred on 12th May. The present author is inclined to accept Brownwell's date. His was almost an eye-witness account. Horton was an astute observer. But he wrote years after the event. Another contemporary source is a letter from Commander H. W. Wratislaw of HMS Sloop Ranger, to Commander A.P.E. Wilmot of HMS Rattlesnake, dated Cape Coast, 17 May 1863 (BrPP). This is a confused account of the war. Though it reports on Bobikuma it does not state clearly who won and who lost.
  3. Captain Brownwell (Agona Swedru) to Governor Pine, 1st May; Captain Williams (Agona Swedru) to Governor Pine 2nd May 1863 (CO.96/61) Captain Williams reached Agona Swedru in the afternoon of 2nd May and there found the allies elated at their victory.

stages of the war, and Major Cochrane. This aspect has not received serious scrutiny by historians.<sup>1</sup> Until mid-May when the British at Cape Coast had become absolutely sure that the Asante invasion was not against them, they showed very little, if any, concern for the safety of the protected states, particularly those in the interior. By the middle of April the British had become fully aware that "large parties of Ashantees have crossed the boundary [River Pra] and invaded the Protectorate, pillaging and over-running the country and compelling the allies to fall back".<sup>2</sup> But all that the Executive Council at Cape Coast Castle could do was to resolve that "as no positive (sic) declaration of war has been made by the King of Ashantee, it was desirable to know whether the alleged incursions of his subjects were with his sanction and approval."<sup>3</sup>

To this end Prince John Owusu Ansa was to leave for Kumasi. He never got beyond the Pra, because the invader made it dangerous for him and his companions to go further. The government at Cape Coast Castle needed no more proof to make them mobilize and advance against the invader. But Pine and the executive ordered war stores to be issued out only to "allies", i.e. the nearby Fante. Not a single gun was sent to Kotoku and its Bosome, Agona and Gomoa allies, who had already fought two major battles against the enemy. And the nearby Fante who received the war stores were instructed not to use their weapons "unless in case of extreme necessity",<sup>4</sup>

---

1. But see Claridge, Vol. I, p. 545.

2. Pine (CCC) to the Duke of Newcastle, 15 April 1863, CO 96/60.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

a clear proof that the war was nowhere near Cape Coast.

Earlier, on 10<sup>th</sup> April, the Executive Council had resolved that Major Cochrane, Officer commanding the Gold Coast Artillery Corps, should take the field with his 420 soldiers,

"not for the purpose of attacking the Ashantees but with a view of observing their movements, concentrating the Allies [i.e. the central and Western Fante], and his little army in an advantageous position so as to command access to that point of the Protectorate the most surely pressed".

These were decisions of the Protecting power when already a section of the Protected were under heavy fire; when those of the Protected not yet attacked had assembled a force of "between 15,000 and 20,000" at Mankesim and were waiting for Cochrane and his professional soldiers to lead them to the aid of Kotoku and Bosome as well as their Agona and Gomoa allies.<sup>1</sup> Worst still Cochrane made a mess of the somewhat belated British war efforts to assist Kotoku and its allies.<sup>2</sup> Governor Pine gives us an insight about Cochrane's movements. On 10th April the Major and his men moved from Cape Coast to Anomabo. There he remained till 13th April, thinking that the enemy might attack that town. But as the enemy did not show up he moved to "Mankesim, about 19 miles in the interior, in the direction of the alleged position of the enemy - where he remained until 5th May, but without meeting with any opposition although reporting to me [Pine] continually that the enemy was sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Pine to Newcastle, 15 April, 1863 CO.96/60.

2. Claridge Vol. I pp. 515-9. Ward, History p. 215.

3. Pine to Newcastle, 12th May, 1863 (CO.96/60). In a lengthy correspondence with Pine (also found in CO.96/60 Cochrane tried to defend his conduct. The correspondence emphasizes rather than refutes his incompetence.

In fact Cochrane did not actively get involved in the war<sup>1</sup> until 5th June when he joined the forces of the rest of the Protectorate that had met at Ajumako prior to going to the aid of Kotoku, Bosome and Agona forces still encamped at Swedru. Cochrane's conduct - or is it misconduct - largely explains the charge of desertion from duty which, according to Pine himself, the people levelled against his government.<sup>2</sup>

The success of Kotoku and its allies in the three set battles had different effects on the Asante invading army and the British administration at Cape Coast Castle. Owusu Kokoo ultimately realised the futility of trying to defeat the Kotoku in war and resolved to try diplomacy as a means to secure the person of Kotokuhene Agyeman. A change in the position of his camp gave the first indication of this new development among the invading army. Until 1st May his war camp had been at Odobin, deep in the heart of Agona.<sup>3</sup> After the Kotoku victory at Nsaba he removed his camp to Gyadam-upon-Birem,<sup>4</sup> an Abuakwa town in Western Akyem on the north bank of the river Birem.<sup>5</sup> This was a much safer place because Abuakwa then seems to have been considerably hostile to Kotoku. In 1863 Abuakwa was still smarting under the defeat it had suffered at the hands of Kotoku in 1860.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Wratislaw (HMS Ranger, Cape Coast) to Wilmot (HMS Rattlesnake), 17 May 1863, BPP Vol. 57 (1863) pp. 307-8.

2. Pine to Newcastle 10th June, 1863 CO.96/60.

3. Captain Brownwell to Cochrane, 1st April 1863 CO.96/61.

4. This is to be distinguished from the old Kotoku capital in Eastern Akyem destroyed by Abuakwa in the 1860 war.

5. Cf. Map No. 7.

6. See Chapter 7 p. 249 above.

For Atta Obiwom, the Abuakwahene, claimed that the land on which the Kotokuhene was settled in Western Akyem fell within Kyebi jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> The Cape Coast Castle administration seems to have suspected Abuakwa intrigues with Asante. This is suggested by the delegation of Fante Chiefs which Pine sent to Kyebi in late 1863 to induce Atta Obiwom to change his hostile attitude towards Kotoku.<sup>2</sup> The continued tension between Kotoku and Abuakwa probably provided the pretext for Asante efforts to persuade Abuakwa to return to its old allegiance to the Asantehene.<sup>3</sup> Abuakwa response was not favourable: by the late 1860s Abuakwa had become most hostile to Asante.<sup>4</sup> In 1863, however, Asante, no doubt regarded Abuakwa as a friend<sup>on</sup> whose soil the Asante army in the field could encamp and feel safe.

At this safe distance, the Commander-in-Chief of the invading army sent to Captains Williams and Brownwell at Agona Swedru, a prisoner-of-war, carrying two sticks, one short the other long. The messenger was to tell the white soldiers in the allies' camp that he

"Prince Owoosoococco, Commander-in-Chief of his Asantehene's invading army .... was encamped at a place called Gadem-upon-Berim, about forty miles from this Swedru; he has come to fetch King Adjiman who had previously insulted and wronged the Prince's father: he will have Adjiman dead or alive; he does not wish to fight the whitemen or the Fantees; if I Captain Williams will give up Adjiman dead or alive the war will be short, in which case I must send the short stick; but if I refuse, I must send the longer, and he will

---

1. Kromer (Kyebi) to Basel, 1 November 1863, No. Akim 18, BMA-PJC.

2. Ibid.

3. Claridge, Vol. 1 p. 524.

4. Cf. Chapter 9 p. 321 below.

remain in the territory for years."<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the authorities at Cape Coast Castle the message-of-sticks had a singularly salutary effect. In the first place it was yet another proof that the invader had not come directly against the British. Secondly it showed that so far the war had not gone well for the invader himself. This evidence confirmed Pine in his conviction, arrived at since 12th May, no doubt as a result of the successes of Kotoku and its immediate allies, that Asante was not all that formidable. The Kotoku victories so encouraged Pine, who had been panicky at the initial stages of the war, that after 1st May he began to advocate that the British should invade Asante itself. From then on he took up the fight for Kotoku and Bosome. For he was now determined "that a final blow shall be struck at Ashantee power, and the question set at rest forever as to whether an arbitrary, cruel, and sanguinary Monarch [Ashantehene] shall be for ever permitted to insult the British flag and outrage the laws of civilization.

"The desirable object" he pleaded with the British Colonial Secretary "can be obtained only by the possession of such a force as I fear the Governor of these settlements can never hope to command unless your Grace should be pleased to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the policy, the economy, and even the mercy of transporting to these shores an army of such strength as would, combined with the allied native

---

1. Captain Williams (Agona Swedru) to Governor Pine (CCC)  
21st May, 1863 CO.96/60.

forces, enable us to reach Coomassie and there plant the British flag".<sup>1</sup>

Pine anticipated that the British Home Government might think that what he was advocating for was just not practicable. He hurried to assure would be sceptics thus:

"To a stranger the cause I point out may appear a visionary one; but I am convinced that even with the disadvantage of climate, the expedition would not be so dangerous, so fatal, or accompanied with such a loss of life as have attended expeditions in other and apparently more congenial climates; and with 2,000 disciplined soldiers followed by upwards of 50,000 native forces who require only to be led and inspired with confidence by the presence of organized troops I would undertake (driving the hordes of Ashantee before me) to march to Coomassie."

To compensate Kotoku in particular and the rest of the Protectorate in general was Pine's objective. For in advocating for the invasion of Asante itself, he declared that he was

"guided by the same principles with respect to the liberty of an innocent subject, which your Grace was pleased to approve in the case of the Chief Gainin [Gyani], as Adjiman is not known to have committed any offence".<sup>2</sup>

For Kotoku and Bosome the Battle of Nsaba virtually marked the end of direct hostility with Asante. From now the British took up their cause. Pine was determined to atone for the betrayal of the trust reposed in the British by Kotoku and the rest of the Protectorate. He was resolved never to leave the Gold Coast "until I have gained them

1. Pine (CC) to Duke of Newcastle, 12th May 1863 CO.96/60. This source is reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents No. 225 pp. 295-6. For colonial Office reaction to Pine's proposition see p. 296 below.

2. Pine to Newcastle, 12 May 1863, CO.96/60.



redress for the wrongs they have suffered ...".<sup>1</sup> This mood of aggression had started to develop after 1st May and it increased on receipt of the message-of-sticks.

His immediate reaction however, was to find confirmation for it, and this meant corresponding directly with the Asante war leaders in the field. On 22nd May he selected Prince J. Owusu Ansa as his messenger to Gyadam-upon-Birem.<sup>2</sup> Ansa was to tell the Asante Commander-in-Chief, that the British accepted in principle the idea of a negotiated settlement which Owusu Kokoo had suggested, through his message-of-sticks, but the British would negotiate only on their own terms and not on those of Asante. Ansa was also to ask Owusu Kokoo to send "accredited and responsible" representatives to Cape Coast, to assist the Governor in enquiring into whatever grievances the Asantehene had against the Kotokuhene; that Owusu Kokoo should realise that Asante had placed themselves in the wrong by invading a part of the Protectorate, with a view to obtaining the person of a Chief under British protection, without first complaining to the British authorities; that the Asante Commander-in-Chief should immediately withdraw his army from the Protectorate and give immediate compensation for whatever damage the invading army had already done in the Protectorate; if Commander Owusu Kokoo refused to accept these pre-conditions, John Owusu Ansa was to end his

---

1. Pine to Newcastle, 12 October 1863 No. 92, CO.96/62.

2. Governor Pine (CCC) to J.O. Ansa (CCC) 22nd May 1863. A copy of this letter can be found in CO.96/108. Ansa was to be accompanied by a Mr. Bernasco, an Assistant Catechist of the Wesleyan Church at Cape Coast and four carriers.

interview with a warning that the British and the Protectorate would wage a fullscale war against Asante.<sup>1</sup>

Ansa's mission proved very advantageous to the frustrated Asante army. It gave the invaders a most welcome opportunity to withdraw secretly without further loss of face. Ansa and his companions set out for Gyadam-upon-Birem on 29th May and arrived there on 31st May. He had his first interview with Commander-in-Chief Owusu Kokoo in the morning of 1st June, 1863. On the same day Ansa sent back a report part of which reads:-

"I have already made known your Excellency's message. The Prince [i.e. Owusu Kokoo], according to their custom, will [formally assemble] his great Chiefs [tomorrow] to hear your Excellency's message again and give an answer. [From] the little I have seen of the Prince this morning, I think he will send a proper messenger with me to Your Excellency ..... Depend upon it I will not let them take advantage of my time."<sup>2</sup>

But this was exactly what happened. On June 2 he reported that the Asante War leaders at Camp Gyadam had resolved (a) that it was not within their competence to start peace talks with the governor without a mandate from the Asantehene, therefore he Owusu Ansa should go to Kumasi and see the King himself; (b) that while Ansa was effecting contact with the Kumasi Court, they would withdraw from the Protectorate and remain on the western bank of the Pra.<sup>3</sup> In

1. Pine to Duke of Newcastle, 10th June, 1863 CO.96/60.

2. J.O. Ansa (Gyadem-upon-Birem) to Governor Pine, 1st June, 1863 CO.96/60. This report did not reach Pine till after 10th June together with a second from Owusu Ansa. Ansa's explanation was that the Asante had detained without his (Ansa's) knowledge the messenger bringing the letter.

3. J.O. Ansa (Gyadam) to Pine, 2nd June 1863 CO.96/61.

view of the above, Ansa asked Governor Pine whether or not he should proceed to Kumasi to see the Asantehene.<sup>1</sup> But in a postscript he wrote: "The Ashantee people are ready to start with us now, which I am very glad [of]". That is to say Ansa who desired the Governor to instruct him as to whether or not he should go to Kumasi felt it was no longer necessary to wait for the Governor's instructions. Clearly he was determined to help his countrymen<sup>to</sup>/withdraw before the Cape Coast administration could subject them to further harassment.

The best way to achieve this goal was to gain sufficient time for the invaders to withdraw unnoticed. And so he made sure that his subsequent communications after his first report did not reach Governor Pine quickly. His second letter, just referred, to did not reach Governor Pine until after 10th June when he sent it together with a third letter, written from a village he called "Akiassiya" (i.e. Akyeasewa) in Asante. In the third letter he explained the delay thus: "I sent Your Excellency a letter from Gadam dated 2nd instant by three messengers, [but] I am very sorry indeed that they [the three messengers and the letter] were returned to me at this place [Akyeasewa] today by the Ashantees."<sup>2</sup> The reason of the Asante Commander-in-Chief, he said, was that the messengers might get killed. But that Ansa had been playing for time can be deduced from his statement, in the same third letter, that he was, however, pleased because "Prince Owoosoo Cocor had faithfully fulfilled

---

1. J.O. Ansa (Gyadam) to Pine, 2nd June 1863 CO.96/61.

2. J.O. Ansa (Akyeasewa, Asante) to Pine, 10th June, 1863 CO.96/61.

his promise [to withdraw from the Protectorate] to my satisfaction. He is [here] now with me with all his army."<sup>1</sup> Thus the Asante war leader who had vowed to stay on in the Protectorate for years in order to secure the person of Kotokuhene Agyeman could not even spend a few days on the borders. The final proof of Ansa's collusion with his country-men was his sudden return to Ajumako on 19th June without reaching Kumasi. His reason was that he "went with Prince Owoosoo Cocor as far as a day and half journey from Coomassie [and he] told me to return."<sup>2</sup> Governor Pine was furious with Ansa, for he saw that Ansa had deliberately helped the invaders to withdraw.<sup>3</sup>

Nor was Pine luckier with his other plans. Immediately after receiving the message-of-sticks, he rushed to Ajumako with the aim of organizing that part of the Protectorate forces assembled there in anticipation of the fullscale war which he intended against the Asante invading army.<sup>4</sup> He arrived there on 28th May and spent about two weeks there, organizing the African forces while waiting to hear from Ansa in Western Akyem. He suddenly fell sick and had to be carried back to Cape Coast on 12th June.

But he was still bent on satisfying the Akyem and the Protectorate as a whole, by punishing Asante in spite of

---

1. J.O. Ansa (Akyeasewa, Asante) to Pine, 10th June, 1863 CO.96/61.

2. Ansa (Ajumako) to Pine, 19th June, 1863 CO.96/61.

3. Pine to Newcastle, 11th July, 1863 CO.96/61.

4. Pine (Ajumako) to Newcastle, 10th June 1863, CO.96/60.

its reverses in the war.<sup>1</sup> Besides, there was a general but erroneous belief, that Akyem and other parts of the Protectorate might be re-invaded.<sup>2</sup> It was better, he thought, to carry the war to Asante on their own soil than to wait to be attacked by them again. He took up with greater zeal the idea of invading Asante itself. But the Colonial Office would not permit such a measure, saying it was too serious to be entertained.<sup>3</sup> The Colonial Office, however, allowed the establishment of two military posts on the border with Asante, one at Akyem Soaduro and the other, which is the better known in Gold Coast history, at Praso in Assin.<sup>4</sup> Claridge gives the impression that the military posts at Praso and Akyem Soaduro were a prelude to an impending British invasion of Asante.<sup>5</sup> This is wrong. They were meant to be "a demonstration" of British military power which, it was hoped, "would induce the King of Ashantee to proffer such [peace] terms as [Pine] could consistently accept".<sup>6</sup> By June 1864 both posts had been abandoned on account of bad weather.<sup>7</sup>

The notion that western Akyem and other parts of

- 
1. Pine to Newcastle, 12 October, 9 & 13 November, and 12 December, 1863, CO.96/62.
  2. Pine to Newcastle, 12 October, and 13 November 1863 CO.96/62.
  3. Secretary of State for the Colonies to the War Office, 22 August 1863, CO.96/61; Metcalfe, Documents, No. 236, p.296.
  4. Pine to Newcastle, 12 February & 11 March 1864, CO.96/64. Claridge, Vol. I p. 527.
  5. Claridge, Vol. I p. 524.
  6. Pine to Newcastle, 12 December 1863, Despatch No. 106, CO.96/62.
  7. Claridge Vol. I pp. 524-530; Crooks, Records, p. 362; Ward History p. 218.

the Protectorate might be invaded again by Asante was strongly prevalent up to June 1864. This was because the general public was not aware of the virtual defeat the Kotoku-Bosome-Agona alliance had inflicted on the invading Asante army in the 1863 war. The fear, however, began to vanish after June 1864,<sup>1</sup> to the extent that some of the interior states, those of Akyem included, began to commit acts of aggression against Kumasi: they raided Asante territory near the border and carried off or killed some of its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Asante did not retaliate, an attitude which Cape Coast Castle authorities felt was most uncharacteristic of her. The truth, as Lieutenant-Colonel Conran said in 1865, was that Asante's reverses in the last war had been quite disastrous.<sup>3</sup>

Viewed against this situation in the Gold Coast, the public and parliamentary furor and fuss to which the Kotoku-Asante war produced in Britain<sup>4</sup> seems ironical, though understandable. In June 1864 the Opposition in the British House of Commons tabled a motion with a view to censuring the Government on the subject of the war. For in Britain, as in the Gold Coast, the general notion was that Asante had invaded a British protectorate with impunity. That cast a slur on Britain as the protecting power. The motion was defeated narrowly by 233 to 226 votes.<sup>5</sup> But the Kotoku-Asante war compelled Britain to

1. Pine to the Right Honourable Edward Cardwell, 10 November 1864, CO.96/65.

2. Report of Major R.S. Jones, 9 May 1865, CO.96/88.

3. Lt.-Colonel Conran (CCC) to Cardwell, 8 September 1865, CO.96/68.

4. The Times, 16 & 17 June 1864 issues.

5. Metcalfe, Documents, No. 241 No. I.

revise her policy in West Africa. It seemed to many that British presence in the Gold Coast was a liability rather than an asset to the British tax payer. Aside from expenses incurred to combat Asante in the 1863 war, the cost to the Imperial Treasury of maintaining the British Gold Coast possessions had risen from £5,000.00 sterling in 1850 to £12,000.00 in 1863.<sup>1</sup> And yet, it was argued, returns from the Gold Coast were not commensurate to investment. All this raised the issue as to whether there was any justification in the continued presence of Britain in the Gold Coast especially and West Africa in general. Some felt there was none, others thought there was.<sup>2</sup> Consequently the British Government, in 1864, appointed Colonel Ord as sole commissioner to investigate the subject of British presence in West Africa, particularly the efficiency of the administration, and recommend ways and means of cutting down expenditure on them. A Parliamentary Select Committee was also set up in 1865 to study Ord's report. Its Chairman was Mr. Charles Bowyer Adderley, a free trader and surprisingly a vociferous campaigner against extension of British Protection beyond the immediate precincts of the forts and castles to neighbouring states and peoples.

After considering Colonel Ord's report the 1865 Select Committee came to the conclusion "that it is not possible to withdraw the British Government, wholly or immediately, from any settlements or engagements on the

---

1. Figures quoted by O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885 (OUP 1956) p. 167.

2. House of Commons Debate, 21st February 1865 (Hansard 3/177/535 f) reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents No. 244 p. 307 Column 1.

West African Coast."<sup>1</sup> It, however, recommended

"that all further extension of territory or assumption of Government or new treaties offering any protection to native tribes, would be inexpedient; and that the object of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the Governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all, except, probably Sierra Leone."

The Committee also recommended for adoption the suggestion that for efficient supervision on administration, all the British West African establishments be headquartered in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This then was the extent of the impact which Kotoku's strained relations with Asante in the early 1860s made on British policy in West Africa.

Meanwhile by the last months of 1865 it had become clear in the Protectorate that Asante would not invade again as many in the Protectorate had expected. In fact by then Asantehene Kwaku Dua himself had started throwing feelers about in search of peace.<sup>2</sup> In September 1865 he sent messengers to Mr. George Blankson, a well known Fante merchant at Anomabo, overtly to buy silk cloth from him but covertly to sound him on the subject of a possible peace settlement. For their safety, the royal messengers first travelled to Kwawu and crossed the Volta, via the Afram plains, into trans-Volta Akwamu. The Akwamuhene then provided them with an escort to Accra from where they were

- 
1. Resolutions of the Select Committee, 26 June 1865 (HC 412 of 1865) reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents, No. 248 p. 311.
  2. Wilks (Asante, p. 223) suggests that it was the Cape Coast Castle administration who made the first peace move, by inviting the Asantehene to peace negotiation.



conveyed in a boat to Anomabo by sea. This unexpected but genuine gesture on the part of Asante enabled Lieutenant-Colonel Conran to reverse his predecessor's policy of hostility towards Asante.

The role of George Blankson in the peace moves has scarcely been emphasized by any of the earlier writers who have touched on this subject. It was the confidence the Kumasi Court placed in him which partly helped to generate moves towards a peace settlement.<sup>1</sup> For his part Blankson worked to justify the trust. To make sure that no Asante messenger was molested on their way to Cape Coast, Blankson himself travelled to Assin Praso in December 1865 to receive and lead three Asante negotiators to Cape Coast.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the Governor, the Asantehene declared:

"Your Excellency, yours by George Blankson to send ..... my ambassadors down to your honour at Cape Coast Castle for putting in order the case between me and you [has been received.]"

I have sent by him one of my sword-bearers named Cofee Doro [Kofi Duro], Chief Cofee Aifilfah [Kofi Affrifah], and Cudjoe Aiboo [Kwadwo Abu] my herald, and I hope to hear from you by them."<sup>3</sup>

The talks lasted throughout the second week of January 1866. A peace settlement was reached in principle

- 
1. George Blankson (Ansonabo) to H.M. Kwaku Dua, 19 September 1865, copy, as Enclosure in Conran to Cardwell 9 October 1865, CO.96/68.
  2. G. Blankson (Praso) to Lt.-Colonel Conran (CCC) 20 and 25 December 1865 (CO.96/70); G. Blankson (Atwereboanna) to Conran, 4 and 5 January, 1866 CO.96/70.
  3. Asantehene to Conran, 19 December; cf. also Asantehene to Blankson, 20 December, 1865 CO.96/70.

on 12th January 1866.<sup>1</sup> A formal but unwritten treaty of peace was effected not at the end of 1865, as some writers have thought,<sup>2</sup> but in April 1866.<sup>3</sup>

Conran's peace settlement, however, was not thorough, though not on account of the reasons often advanced to condemn it,<sup>4</sup> but because of a serious omission in the settlement. He failed to make Akyem Kotoku a direct party to the peace of April 1866. Such an involvement was a necessary step<sup>which</sup> he easily could have taken by simply inviting the personal assent of Kotokuhene Agyeman.<sup>5</sup> The omission of Akyem Kotoku from the treaty as a direct party is all the more surprising since Conran was fully aware that strained Kotoku-Asante relations were the cause of the 1863 war.<sup>6</sup>

The sin of omission nearly marred the settlement on account of the existence of continued tension between Kotoku and Asante. In May 1866, that is barely a month after

1. "Minutes of Proceedings of Public Meeting with the Ashantee Ambassadors of Peace at Cape Coast", 8 and 15 January, 1866; Conran to Asantehene 18 January, 1866; Conran to Assin Atanosohene (Copy), 25 January; Conran to Cardwell, 5 February, 1866 CO.96/70.
2. Claridge, Vol. I p. 545; Ward, History, p. 220.
3. Conran (CCC) to Major Blackall, Governor-in-Chief (SL), 10 May and 6 July; Blackall (SL) to CO 19 May and 3 August 1866, CO.96/71.
4. Claridge Vol. 1 pp. 545-6; Ward, History, p. 220; Wilks, Asante, p. 223. This view claims that the Governor issued a proclamation that Asante had sued for peace, whereupon the Asantehene became annoyed and ended the peace talks.
5. Maclean achieved excellent results by inviting Abuakwa to assent to the 1831 Treaty of Peace. Cf. Chapter 5 p. above.
6. Cf. n.1 p. 303 below.

the Conran peace settlement, Kotoku and Bosome farms were raided by a group of Asante subjects. According to King Kofi Agyeman of Kotoku, the raids had occurred without the least provocation on the part of Kotoku and Bosome. He therefore concluded that the raids could well be a prelude to yet another attack <sup>which</sup> Asante might be planning against his Kingdom and Bosome. With this frame of mind he appealed to the Cape Coast Castle Administration for "a small quantity of gun-powder and leadbars to enable him resist any attack which might be made on his part of the British Protectorate".<sup>1</sup> Irwine, as the Acting Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, felt the Kotoku request was reasonable because such a supply would encourage the Western Akyem to ward off any possible Asante encroachment on the Protectorate.<sup>2</sup>

But Conran's reaction to the request was utter disbelief. In his mind's eye he could see the impending collapse of all his efforts to establish a lasting peace between the Protectorate and Asante. To him if he failed, Kotokuhene Agyeman would have been the sole cause. That Chief, he felt, should be checked before he could cause further damage. In this mixed mood of fear and anger, Conran saw no justification for anybody, much less an Acting Civil Commandant, to encourage Agyeman. To Irwine,

---

1. Nichol Irwine (Accra) to Colonel Conran (CCC), 6 May 1866 CO.96/72. A merchant in the employ of the Firm F. & L. Swanzy, Irwine was then acting as the Civil Commandant of the Eastern Provinces. It was through him that the Kotokuhene appealed to Government for the war stores.

2. Ibid.

the Administrator expressed

"his very great surprise to see or hear of your recommending that this scoundrel, Adjaman (sic) who provoked the last [1863] war, and now wants to do the same, should receive encouragement whilst the Government are at peace with the King of Ashantee."<sup>1</sup>

Conran then reminded Irwine that the peace arrangement he had just effected with Asante enjoined the Kotokuhene, and any other traditional ruler for that matter, to refrain from ill-treating Asante subjects, "who if wrong, will be punished by their King through the governor's report thereafter." Irwine was therefore to warn the Kotokuhene further that

"if he .... by any means whatever, disturbs the peaceful relations now existing between Asante and the Government, Colonel Conran, with an armed force, will proceed to Akim for the purpose of bringing him down to this coast prior to transposing him beyond the seas altogether, as a most seditious and insubordinate Chief is never at rest."<sup>2</sup>

Irwine was surprised to learn that the governor entertained so low an opinion about the Kotokuhene as to call him a scoundrel. "I have been resident in Accra for twelve years", he said, "and I can assure Your Excellency that this chief has always been looked upon with such great universal respect that he is considered by the whole of the Eastern Districts as the trustworthy guardian of his frontiers against Ashantee".<sup>3</sup>

1. Alphonso Cary, Colonial Secretary at CCC to Mr. Irwine (Accra), 11th May, 1866 CO.96/72.

2. Alphonso Cary (CCC) to Irwine (Accra); Irwine 11 May 1866, CO.96/72.

3. Irwine to Conran, 14 May 1866, CO.96/72.

The raids on the Kotoku farms, however, did not lead to fresh war between Nsuaem and Kumasi. The raids were perhaps in reply to similar activities undertaken by Kotoku against Southern Asante palatine states like Adanse, Bekwae, Kokofu and Kontanase. But the tension continued to exist till 1867 when both Agyeman and Kwaku Dua died, the one in or about July and the other earlier in May. Thus with respect to Kotoku-Asante relations, Kofi Agyeman bequeathed a difficult inheritance to his successor, Kwabena Fua. For the Lower Volta District was fast emerging as the next battleground for Kotoku and Asante.

## CHAPTER 9

### DOMPRE OF NSAWAM, c.1867-1871

While the presence of the bulk of the Kotoku in Western Akyem was creating problems for the district in particular and the western sector of the Gold Coast in general, the Ankobea division, headed by Dompree, had, by 1867, started influencing the course of events in the eastern sector and the lower Trans-Volta district from their base at Nsawam. Trade interests got the Kotoku of Nsawam involved in the inter-state conflicts which bedevilled the Lower Volta District as from about 1865. The involvement culminated in Kotoku (Nsawam) collaboration with British efforts to re-establish their authority in the district from which they had withdrawn in 1860.

The founding of Nsawam by the Ankobea section of the Kotoku was a direct result of the differences between Dompree, the Ankobeahene, and Agyeman the Kotokuhene, following the Kotoku-Abuakwa war of 1860.<sup>1</sup> Unable to tolerate his King, Dompree withdrew from Western Akyem altogether with his subjects, and headed eastwards till they reached extreme southwestern Akuapem where they decided to settle. They appealed to the Aburihene of Akuapem, to whom the land immediately belonged, for the grant of the site on which they founded a town and called it Nsaawa-mu (i.e. Nsawam today).<sup>2</sup> It is even possible that

---

1. The rift is discussed in Chapter 8 pp. 266 above.

2. Nsawam Native Affairs, Case No. 76/191, Ghana National Archives (GNA); AKT: ADOAGYIRI (1968/9). Nsawam means "Under-the-Nsaa-trees. 'Asaa' or 'asoaa' (pl. nsaa) is a wild fruit tree of the grapes family.

Dompere and his subjects did not go to Western Akyem but moved directly southwards after the 1860 war with Abuakwa. The founding of the town may have taken place between April 1860 and 1866 when Dompere started influencing the course of events in the Eastern Districts of the Gold Coast.

Abundance of fish in the nearby river Densu is held up as Dompere's reason for choosing the Nsawam site.<sup>1</sup> Other and better factors seem to have influenced the choice. Political independence was possibly one. The withdrawal from Western Akyem meant a physical separation as well as political isolation of the Ankobea headquarters from the rest of the Kotoku polity. But Dompere seems to have had no desire to substitute any other power for the authority of the Kotokuhene. Since his town of Nsawam was on Akuapem soil, he would of course regard the Okuapemhene, through the Aburihene, as his landlord.<sup>2</sup> But situated about ten miles west of the Akuapem hills, Nsawam was quite removed from the main stream of Akuapem political life which was located on top of the hills. Besides Akuapem, other nearby states were Ga, about twenty-five miles to the south, Abuakwa, some forty miles to the north and Agona, about thirty miles to the west. To none of these did Dompere transfer his allegiance.

Economic interest however appears to have been

---

1. AKT: Adsagyiri (1968/9).

2. At the beginning of the present century a quarrel with their landlords compelled the Kotoku to abandon Nsawam to found Adoagyiri just on the western bank of Densu opposite Nsawam. The land here belonged, and still belongs, to the Abuakwa-hene. The people of Adoagyiri to this day pay homage to the Abuakwahene on account of the land on which they live. During the 1968 Okyeman Council meeting the present author met an Adoagyiri delegation attending the meeting.

another and perhaps the greatest factor which influenced Dompere's choice of Nsawam as a place to settle. Nsawam was on economic cross roads, as it were.<sup>1</sup> A trade route linked it to Accra, by far and away the most commercial centre in the Gold Coast. This enabled the Kotoku of Nsawam to drive a salt trade from the Ga coast to the interior.<sup>2</sup> The trade route from Accra extended northwards to reach Abuakwa and beyond it.<sup>3</sup> This route would help Dompere and his subjects to share in the Eastern Akyem gold-digging industry in the Birem and Densu basins. A third route from Nsawam went westwards to Adeisu where it bifurcated, with one branch going northwards to Western Akyem via Asamankese and Akwatia, and the other to Agona Swedru. The people of Nsawam could exploit the European trade on the Senya Breku-Winneba coast via Avona Swedru. A fourth trade route went eastwards to climb and descend the Akuapem hills and reach the Lower Volta region, in whose economy the Kotoku of Nsawam shared fully.<sup>4</sup> The importance of this last route to Nsawam seems to have been second only to the one leading to the Ga coast.

For the economy of the Lower Volta district<sup>5</sup> was

---

1. See Map No.8.

2. AKT: Adoagyiri.

3. T.B. Freeman's Report on a mission to Eastern Akyem in 1857, dd. 28 December 1867, CO.96/43.

4. Cf. pp. 308 f. below.

5. The Lower Volta Region may be said to have roughly consisted of the district falling within about forty miles on either side of the stretch of the Volta between its estuary at Ada and the point where the river Daji joins the Volta. See Map. 8.



very prosperous during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The prosperity of the region derived from agriculture and trade. Among the leading agricultural and forest products exported from or via the district were cotton,<sup>2</sup> palm oil,<sup>3</sup> and to a less extent peanuts.<sup>4</sup> Between 1858 and 1866 Krobo, perhaps the greatest producer of palm oil in all Gold Coast during the second half of the nineteenth century, exported much of its produce via the Lower Volta and the Ada-Anlo coast, in an attempt to beat British monopoly and low prices for the commodity on the coast between Accra and Prampram.<sup>5</sup> So abundant was palm oil from Krobo and Akuapem that the 1861 season was described as "glorious."<sup>6</sup> Gum copal from Akyem also reached the Ada-Keta coast through Lower Volta for sale mainly to American merchant-men.<sup>7</sup> Part of Akyem gold export would also go via the same channel.

- 
1. For a detailed study of the Lower Volta economy see Reynolds, E., Trade and Economic Change on the Gold Coast 1807-1874, N.U.P. 1974, especially pp.141-144 & 172.
  2. Evidence of Rev. E. Shrenk before the 1865 British Parliamentary Select Committee, Br. P.P. (1865) Vol. 412 pp. 136, 142 & 147; Ga Mantse Cudjoe Ababeo (Ada) to Lt.-Colonel Conran (CCC), 1 November 1866; Crozier, Chief Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts (Accra) to Conran, 29 November 1866, CO.96/72; Horton, Letters, pp.75-6.
  3. The West African Herald, quoted by The London Times, 26 October 1861.
  4. Ibid.
  5. F. Wolfson, "A Price Agreement on the Gold Coast. The Krobo Oil Boycott, 1858-1866," in *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, Vol. 6 No. 1 (1953) pp. 68-77; Kimble, op. cit. pp. 6 & 187-188; D.E.K. Amenumey, "Geraldo de Lima: A Reappraisal," in T.H.S.G. Vol. IX (1968) pp.68-9.
  6. West African Herald, quoted by the London Times, 26 October 1861.
  7. J. Muller's Report to Basel on a journey to Eastern Akyem in 1868, 11 March 1868, BMA-PJC.

These agricultural, forest and mineral products exported from or through the region turned the Lower Volta district into one big market of brisk international trade attracting both American and European ships.<sup>1</sup> The truth is that besides the commodities already mentioned, the region exported slaves in spite of the general abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade; Asante and the Lower Trans-Volta states were the slave producers while South American merchantmen were the buyers.<sup>2</sup> The other feature which made the "Volta" trade attractive was the non-existence of customs duties on the Ada-Keta coast.

African and European merchants resident in Accra and the Adangbe-Anlo coast found the Volta trade most attractive.<sup>3</sup> The preponderant participation of the Accra merchants in the Volta trade emphasized its attractiveness to non-Voltaic peoples. States and peoples like Kwawu, Akuapem, Fante, Asante, and above all the Akyem, vied to get a share in the Volta trade, owing to the wide variety of European manufactured goods available in the trade. Akyem

---

1. The London Times, 26 October 1861.

2. Alfred Churchill to Colonial Office, 20 April 1863, CO.96/63; R. Pine (CCC) to the Colonial Office, London, 9 November 1863, CO.96/62; African Times, 23 January 1864 Amenume, "Geraldo," THSG. Vol. IX pp. 65-68.

3. Memorials of Accra Merchants to Lt.-Colonel Conran, 31 January and 24 February 1866; Crozier to Conran, 5 December 1866 CO.96/70. Prominent among the Accra merchants were Nicol Irwine of the firm Foster & Smith; F. & L. Swanzy, G.S.B. Hyall, William Morris, James and Charles Bannerman, S. Brownwell, William P. Gunnell, N.H. Luterodt, William Addo, G.F. Cleland, Leberecht Hesse, and N.L. Rottmann of the trading wing of the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast. Geraldo de Lima, an Ewe, was the foremost of the merchants not residing in Accra. His bases were at Ada and Keta.

traders carried trade to and from the Trans-Volta states. Most avid among them were the Kotoku of Nsawam.<sup>1</sup>

But economic pursuits involved Nsawam in the inter-state conflicts which bedevilled the district as from 1865, on account of trade rivalries and traditional tribal animosities. The conflicts were very boisterous, and adversely affected trade in the region.<sup>2</sup> In 1865 Geraldo's<sup>3</sup> seizure of twelve casks of palm oil being canoed down from Kpong to Ada sparked off a dispute between him and the people of Ada who eventually burnt down his shop and house; he solicited support from Anlo, the traditional enemies of Ada, and war broke out between the two.<sup>4</sup> To eliminate Geraldo's stiff competition in the Volta trade, the Accra merchants got the crew of H.M.S. Dart to bombard some of the Anlo coastal towns; the Anlo countered with piracy on the navigable stretch of the Volta between Ada and Kpong, about sixty miles upstream. Kpong was then the greatest collecting centre of the Volta trade. The object of the piracy was to block the Volta as the major trade route for the Accra merchants most of whom had business establishments at Kpong, "the great emporium of the cotton trade."<sup>5</sup> In this

- 
1. T.B. Freeman (Odumase-Krobo) to Ussher, 19 August 1867, CO.96/79; Dodi Tradition, cited by Marion Johnson, "Ashanti East of the Volta", in THSG. Vol. VIII (1965).
  2. Reynolds, Trade & Economic Change, pp.143-4.
  3. The most recent and objective account on Geraldo de Lima is that of Amenumey, in the THSG. Vol. IX (1968), already referred to.
  4. Memorials of the Accra Merchants to Conran, 31 January & 24 February 1866, CO.96/70; Amenumey, "Geraldo".
  5. Horton, Letters, pp. 75-6.

exercise the Anlo were supported by Akwamu and Akwamu dependencies like Dafor and Volo.

Efforts of the British administration at Cape Coast Castle to solve the Volta conflict through military approach widened the area of conflict. In response to repeated appeals of the Accra merchants who represented Geraldo de Lima and the Anlo as saboteurs of the Volta trade and therefore enemies of British interests,<sup>1</sup> the administration of Lieutenant-Colonel Conran organised an armed expedition to the Lower Volta District in March-April 1866. The sole object was to subdue the Anlo and Geraldo. Among the participants in the expedition were many of the Accra merchants themselves, Ga and Adangbe rulers, Akuapem, and the Kotoku of Nsawam led by Dompere.

Dompere's love of military adventure is given as the fundamental cause of the involvement of Nsawam in the expedition.<sup>2</sup> The tradition of Adoagyiri says Dompere and some of his subjects had gone to trade in Accra where he learned about the projected expedition. Immediately he offered to fight for "Nkranhene Takyi" (i.e. Ga Mantse, Tackie), one of the three Ga rulers who had undertaken to lead the expedition. Dompere, no doubt, had better motives. Probably acquisition of firearms was one. To the Ga chiefs, Lieutenant-Colonel Conran issued about five thousand muskets and a large quantity of ammunition for use during the

---

1. Merchant Memorials, 21 January and 24 February 1866.

2. AKT: Adoagyiri.

expedition.<sup>1</sup> To fight for the Ga rulers was a sure means of obtaining some of the arms and ammunition. A much nobler motive of Dompere's, however, seems to have been his desire to protect and preserve the share of Nsawam in the Volta trade. In fact in 1867 he and his subjects emerged as a principal party in the Volta conflict on account of their trade interests in the area.<sup>2</sup>

The details of the expedition need not detain us.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say <sup>that</sup> it failed ultimately to achieve its aim of clearing the Volta water-way in order to allow the smooth flow of trade once more.<sup>4</sup> There was no radical change in the situation up to 1868 even though by then diplomacy had enabled the British West African administration to reach peace agreement with the Anlo on two occasions, one in early 1867 and the other in late 1868.<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. Conran to Quarter Master General, HM Forces, London, 8 March 1866; Conran to Cardwell, 10 March 1866, CO.96/70. Claridge (Vol. I p. 549) puts the figure at 1,200. He seems to have based his figure on that of Mr. James Bannerman who gave the same number in a letter to Horton in 1869. Cf. Horton Letters p. 34 footnote.
  2. Cf. pp. 313 f. below.
  3. Claridge, Vol. I pp. 548-552; Ward, History, pp. 227-228.
  4. Conran to Cardwell, 5 May 1866; Conran to the Accra merchants, 28 May; Conran to Blackall (Freetown) 9 June; Blackall to Colonial Office, 20 June 1866, Petition of Accra Merchants to Conran, 12 November 1866, CO.96/72.
  5. Blackall (Freetown) to Carnarvon (CO), 6 May 1867, CO.96/74 ; Treaty Opening the River Volta, 30 November 1868, reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents, Appx. C, p. 746.

The failure to resolve the Volta violence is attributed to Anlo inability to keep faith.<sup>1</sup> Another cause of the failure was the emergence, by 1867, of the Kotoku of Nsawam as principal party in the conflict.<sup>2</sup> Ussher's administration emphasized this point in September 1867 when it described the presence in the Lower Volta District of the Kotoku (Nsawam) army, led by Dompere, as a threat to peace and responsible for the continued existence of the Volta conflict.<sup>3</sup>

Efforts of Dompere to rescue about forty Nsawam traders from the Dafor and Volo was the immediate cause of the continued presence of the Kotoku (Nsawam) in the Volta area.<sup>4</sup> The Dafor and Volo, inhabiting the banks of the Volta south of Akuse,<sup>5</sup> were a piratical set of people owing allegiance to Akwamu. In or about April 1867, they seized, on the orders of the Akwamuhene, about forty traders from Nsawam, robbed and detained them and even killed some of them.<sup>6</sup> Probably this is the incident which Ward alludes to

- 
1. Amenumey, "Geraldo", THSG. Vol. IX (1968) p. 71.
  2. The determination of the Ga chiefs to achieve a military victory over the Anlo and thereby make amends to the failure of the 1866 expedition was yet another. For this, the administration at Cape Coast Castle, headed by Ussher, Conran's successor, outlawed the Ga chiefs in mid-1867.
  3. Ussher to Yonge (Freetown), 6 September 1867 CO.96/74.
  4. By the end of 1867, the Ga rulers had withdrawn from the Volta district.
  5. Few miles south of present day Adomi bridge.
  6. T.B. Freeman (Odumase-Krobo) to Ussher (CCC), 19 August 1867, CO.96/79. Dodi tradition claims that the Kotoku traders got involved in a dispute over market tolls and the Kotokuhene sent Dompere to go and investigate. Cf. Marion Johnson in THSG. Vol. VIII p.44. This traditional evidence is not acceptable because up to July 1867 when he died, Kotokuhene Agyeman was still not reconciled with Dompere following differences between them since 1860.

when he says that the Akwamu were "in the habit of way-laying Akim Kotoku traders and robbing them."<sup>1</sup> The maltreatment of the Nsawam traders was obviously Akwamu's reprisal against Dompere for assisting the Ga-Adangme chiefs in the 1866 expedition against Anlo, Akwamu's ally.

Eventually the measure backfired against the Dafor, Volo and the Akwamu themselves. Dompere was a warrior chief who would not let slip any opportunity to fight.<sup>2</sup> Besides, it was his duty to rescue his subjects. Ussher under-rated this obligation of the Kotoku chief in his despatch of 6th September when he said that a

"more important reason for the hostile attitude of the Doffoes [and Volo] is the unnecessary and inconvenient armed presence of the Akim Captain Odum-Pira at Asuacharry."<sup>3</sup>

Apparently Ussher was playing down the seriousness of the situation for the benefit of his superior in Freetown. That he was really concerned showed in his appointment, in June 1867, of Mr. T.B. Freeman as chief Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts so that Freeman might use "his acknowledged tact" to solve the Volta problem.<sup>4</sup>

Though the Colonial Office did not ultimately approve of the appointment, before the disapproval arrived in the Gold Coast in or about November 1867,<sup>5</sup> Freeman had

1. Ward, History, p. 230.

2. AKT: Adoagyiri.

3. Odum-Pira = Dompere or Odompre; Asuacharry = Asutware.

4. Ussher to Yonge, 6 September 1867, CO.96/74.

5. Buckingham (CO) to the Administrator-in-Chief (Freetown), 18 November 1867, CO.96/74. The reason given was that Freeman had been dismissed from the Gold Coast administration in 1860 for gross misconduct. Cf. Chapter 7 p. above for details.

made efforts to resolve the Volta conflict. He singled out the Akyem Kotoku (Nsawam) factor as one of the two major barriers impeding solution to the Volta problem. In this frame of mind he immediately sent to ask Domppe and his army to stop all hostility against the Dafor, Volo and Akwamu, confine themselves to only a defensive measure, and wait till they heard from the government again.<sup>1</sup> He followed up words with work. He left Accra for Odumase, the Manya Krobo capital, from where he, on 10th August, sent messengers to invite Domppe, then at Asutware, to come and confer with him at Odumase on the subject of the Volta conflict.<sup>2</sup> Domppe declined the invitation for two reasons. He said Odumase was a place he would scarcely visit because Odonkor Azu, Konor (King) of Manya Krobo, was intriguing with Akwamu against Kotoku (Msawam) interest; secondly he just could not leave Asutware, his base, because the Dafor and Volo were threatening him with an attack.<sup>3</sup> Eventually Freeman had to go to Asutware in order to meet Domppe. He was accompanied by Rev. Zimmermann of the Basel Mission station at Odumase.

On 15th August he met Domppe formally. Domppe's personality very much impressed Freeman. The Nsawam chief was "courteous and respectful." The diplomatic move paid off, at least in theory, for Domppe agreed in principle to leave the redress of his grievances against the Dafor, Volo

- 
1. Freeman's Report on a Mission to Akuapem and Krobo, 5 July 1867, CO.96/74.
  2. Freeman to Ussher, 19 August 1867, CO.96/74.
  3. Ibid.



and Akwamu in the hands of the government, and suspend all his military operations.<sup>1</sup>

Part of the solution of the Volta conflict of course lay in Akwamu. Domppe's conciliatory attitude encouraged Freeman to turn to Kwafo Akoto, the Akwamuhene. Again accompanied by Rev. Zimmermann and Mr. Rotmann,<sup>2</sup> Freeman went to Akwamufie on 28th August, and succeeded in talking the Akwamuhene into signing "a Treaty of Amity" and commerce with the government.<sup>3</sup>

Ussher was elated at Freeman's success with Domppe of Nsawam and the Akwamu. The end to the Volta problem, he said in his letter of 6th September already cited, was now in sight:

"The only matter now remaining which gives me some uneasiness is the probable correctness of the rumours of the death of Quaquoe Dooah, King of Ashantee. Should this really prove to be the case, I fear that his successor will be easily led by the war party of Ashantee to commit acts of aggression on the Protectorate, unless this Government, by a mixture of firmness and conciliation, can avert the blow."

In reality Freeman's success had come too late to be lasting. On account of the armed Kotoku presence in the Lower Volta district, Akwamu and Anlo had long sent to ask for Asante military assistance.<sup>4</sup> Only the death of the Asantehene in May 1867 had prevented Asante from immediately responding

---

1. Freeman to Ussher, 19 August 1867, CO.96/74.

2. See p. 309 n3 above for his identity.

3. "Treaty of Amity", 28 August 1867, CO.96/74; also reproduced by Metcalfe, Documents, p. 746.

4. Freeman to Ussher, 19 August 1867, CO.96/74; cf. also Wilks, Asante, pp. 224-5.

favourably to the Akwamu-Anlo appeal. In anticipation of the impending help from Asante, Akwamu did not urge the Dafor and Volo to release the Kotoku traders held in detention by them. Consequently Dompere was obliged to renew hostilities as from September 1867. Up to June 1868 when Ussher went on leave, the Volta conflict still remained unresolved.<sup>1</sup> The problem remained for his stand-in, Mr. Simpson, acting as Administrator, to attempt a solution to it, as best he could.

Simpson emphasized the seriousness of the situation in September 1868 when he declared that the Eastern Districts (by which he included the Lower Volta District) required greater attention than they had hitherto received because they were in a very unsettled state: the trade routes were closed and the whole navigable stretch of the Volta had been blocked by the ceaseless and "petty hostilities" among the inhabitants occupying both banks of the river.<sup>2</sup>

To describe the hostilities as petty was an understatement. By 1868 the conflict had increased in scope and intensity. The Kotoku of Nsawam had struck an alliance with Krepi in reply to the Akwamu-Anlo-Dafor-Volo one. No wonder that the Kennedy Peace Treaty of November 1868 with Anlo<sup>3</sup> failed to end hostilities. The armed presence of the Kotoku (Nsawam) as a key factor in the Volta conflict was emphasized in December 1868 when the Anlo bitterly complained

1. Ussher to Freetown, 5 December 1867, CO.96/74; same to same; 6 February 1868, CO.96/76.

2. Simpson (CCC) to Sir Arthur Kennedy, 5 September 1868, CO.96/79.

3. See p. 316 n.3 above.

against what they described as the excesses of the Akyem Kotoku army "under Odumpeley."<sup>1</sup> By excesses the Anlo no doubt were referring to Domppe's seizure and execution of two Anlo ambassadors returning from a mission to Kumasi.<sup>2</sup> They and Akwamu must have renewed the appeal to Kumasi for military aid against Domppe, for by the early months of 1869 an Asante army of about five thousand, under the command of Asamoa Nkwanta, had arrived in the Lower Volta district to assist the Akwamu-Anlo alliance against the Kotoku (Nsawam) - Krepi alliance headed by Domppe.<sup>3</sup> Thus the view that in 1869 Asante invaded Krepi to acquire booty needs to be revised.<sup>4</sup> The Akwamu remember very well that they solicited Asante support against Domppe.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that old enmity with Kotoku partly inspired the favourable Asante response to the Akwamu-Anlo invitation. The request offered Asante an opportunity to meet and if possible defeat an Akyem Kotoku army, no matter how less representative it was, and thus square matters with Kotoku at whose hands Asante had suffered two defeats, one in 1860 and the other

- 
1. Lawson (Accra) to Kennedy (Freetown), 17 December 1868, C0.96/79. Lawson was left by Kennedy in the Volta district in November to complete the peace agreement with Anlo.
  2. D.E.K. Amenumey, 1964 M.A. Thesis (unpublished) pp. 182-3.
  3. Simpson to Kennedy, 22nd March 1869, C0.96/79. Other sources say that the command was given to Nantwi. Cf. Ramseyer, F.A. and Kuhne, J., Four Years in Ashantee, London 1897, pp. 57 & 136; Ward, History, p. 241; Wilks, Asante, p. 225.
  4. Ellis (1893), p. 260; Claridge, Vol. I, p. 576; Kimble, op. cit. p. 269.
  5. Akwamu Tradition, cited by Ward, History, p. 230.

in 1863.<sup>1</sup> To protect its commercial interest in the Lower Volta district was possibly another Asante aim. By 1869 then the scope of the Volta conflict, still sustained by economic interests and traditional antagonisms, had widened to include not only Ada and Anlo, but also Akwamu and Krepi as well as Asante and Akyem Kotoku (Nsawam). What Ussher had anticipated in 1867 thus happened in 1869.

The Kotoku-Krepi alliance, headed by Dompree, met the formidable force of the enemy alliance in early 1869. The Asante force, as already noted, was about five thousand.<sup>2</sup> The strength of Akwamu is not known, but the Anlo force numbered about six hundred, all armed with guns.<sup>3</sup> The strength of Krepi is also not known; but the Kotoku force under Dompree consisted of about four hundred soldiers.<sup>4</sup> By March 1869 two major battles had taken place. The importance of the Kotoku factor was again emphasized in March 1869 when Simpson, commenting on the war, said that in the two battles, the Krepi obtained

"the powerful assistance of Dompree, an Akim Captain who had come to Crepee for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction from the Aquamoos for some property of his countrymen which the Akwamu had plundered them of whilst peaceably trading ..... This man is undoubtedly the leading spirit of these districts; his name is a terror even to the Ashantees themselves; and he has shown qualities which serve to indicate him as a man of remarkable energy, talent, and daring courage ..... He alone, unaided, at the

---

1. See Chapter 7 pp.249-251 and Chapter 8 pp.283-285 above.

2. Cf. p. 318 above.

3. Zimmermann (Odumase-Krobo) to Shrenk (Akropon, Akuapem), 17 May 1869, cited in Shrenk to Russell, Chief Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, 21 May 1869, CO.96/80.

4. Simpson to Kennedy, 2nd March 1869, CO.96/79.

head of 400 followers, has defeated the Aquamoos in two engagements against great odds, and at present is the barrier to a general subjection of Crepee by the Ashantees."<sup>1</sup>

Simpson initially thought of using diplomacy to try and resolve the Volta conflict, as Blackall and Freeman in 1867 and Kennedy in 1868 had attempted to do. He felt that Akwamu was the key factor. Consequently in the last days of February 1869 he journeyed to Akwamufie in order to effect a peace settlement with those people. After a protracted discussion lasting five days during which he said he was virtually a prisoner of the Akwamu, he succeeded in signing a peace treaty with the Akwamuhene.<sup>2</sup> But he knew right from his arrival at Akwamufie on 1st March that diplomacy as a means of resolving the Volta problem was doomed to failure owing to "the ominous presence of the Ashantees" in the area.<sup>3</sup>

This realisation, together with his awareness of Dompere's qualities as a first class soldier, made Simpson decide on using military approach to resolve the conflict.

---

1. Simpson to Kennedy, 22 March 1869, CO.96/79.

2. Simpson (Akwamufie) to Kennedy, 2 March 1869, CO.96/79. It is claimed that the Akwamu would have killed him but for the intervention of Adu Bofuo, commander of the Asante forces in the Lower Volta district. (Cf. Claridge Vol. I p. 579; Ward, History, p. 242). It must be pointed out that by March 1869, Adu Bofuo had not as yet arrived in the area. He arrived there in May (cf. p. 323 below). It must have been Asamoa Nkwanta then who interceded to save him if indeed Simpson's life was in danger. One is inclined to think that this was a piece of exaggeration by Simpson.

3. Simpson to Kennedy, 2 March 1869, CO.96/79.

To him Dompere was the right means. This plan matured on 8th March 1869 when he, in a strongly worded letter, requested Kofi Karikari, the new Asantehene, to withdraw Asamoa Nkwanta's army immediately from the Lower Volta District, or he Simpson would not hesitate to give material support to the Krepi in defence of their country.<sup>1</sup> In anticipation of the refusal of the Asante Court to comply with this request, Simpson signed on Dompere and his small Kotoku force against the enemy.<sup>2</sup> Thus by early 1869 Dompere, whom, barely two years ago, the administration had described as a disturber of peace, had emerged as a soldier, in the employ of the government, charged with the pacification of the Lower Volta region.

To help Dompere achieve success Simpson tried to rally support from other parts of the Eastern Districts. He began to mobilize the Ga to go to the aid of Dompere.<sup>3</sup> He also tried to get Eastern Akyem to help. To Abuakwaahene Amoako Atta I, described as the bravest, staunchest and the most determined foe of Asante, he sent a gift of £100.00 sterling and a consignment of arms and ammunition and the message that the government relied on his loyalty to the British Crown and welfare of the Protectorate to render every

- 
1. Simpson (Odumase-Krobo) to Asantehene, 8 March 1869, copy, enclosed in Simpson to Kennedy 22 March 1869 CO.96/79.
  2. Simpson (Odumase-Krobo) to "Dompere, commanding the Ackim Forces," 8 March 1869, CO.96/79.
  3. Simpson (Accra) to Kennedy, 22 March 1869, CO.96/79; Horton, Letters, pp. 36-7 footnote.

assistance "in your power" to oppose the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Domppe's employment as a government soldier, however, did not last long because the Administrator-in-Chief of the British West African possessions as well as the Colonial Office did not approve of the military approach adopted by Simpson to resolve the Volta question.<sup>2</sup> By June Simpson had reversed his policy and discontinued sending war stores to "Domppey and his Akim army."<sup>3</sup>

Domppe was left in the lurch, as it were. Simpson's bellicosity, as spelt out in his 8th March letter to the Asantehene, and preparations for armed confrontation, together with Domppe's successes against Asamoa Nkwanta, had

1. Simpson (Odumase-Krobo) to "King Attah, Ackim," 8 March 1869, CO.96/79. Cf. also Kromer (Kyebi) to Basel, 28 July 1869, No. Akim 9 and 7 October 1869, No. Akim 15; Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Mader (Akropon, Akuapem), 9 August 1869, No. Akim 11, BMA-PJC.
2. Kennedy (Freetown) to Simpson, 7 April 1869, CO.96/79; Granville (CO) to Kennedy (Freetown) 17 May 1869, CO.96/79; Metcalfe, Documents, pp. 326-328. Kennedy in his 7 April letter wrote: "Whatever may have been the result of your negotiations with the King of Ashantee, I am averse to your committing the Government to affording any material aid to the Krepi etc. as long as the belligerents confine themselves to the distant district of Crepee." And Granville in his letter of 17th May said Simpson "had adopted a very hazardous cause without a clear apprehension of the facts or a just calculation of his powers, a serious error in an officer occupying so responsible a position." His measures, Granville added, "would make the British Government not a neutral, nor even an ally, but a principal in the quarrel conflict" and that the defeat of the Akyem Kotoku-Krepi alliance would be "the defeat or ill success of the British government. If he Simpson were a less efficient and zealous public servant, I should have therefore thought it necessary to recall his commission ..... I refrain, however, from doing so, in the confident hope that he will loyally dispel the illusions his vows must have created, and that his knowledge of native character will enable him to retain that influence which this untoward affair must no doubt impair."
3. Simpson to Kennedy, 19 June 1869, CO.96/79.

so angered the Asantehene that in or about May 1869 he sent a much larger force of fifteen thousand, under Adu Bofuo, to go and assist the Akwamu and Anlo.<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of the Adu Bofuo reinforcement increased the enemy opposition to Dompere. By May 1869 he was fighting against great odds. Numerically his own Kotoku force of four hundred must have thinned down, and Krepi could not have provided any great force, though there is no means of telling their strength with confidence. Besides, he seems to have run out of war stores. Before the disapproval of his policy reached him in May, Simpson had detailed Oben Daako, the younger brother of Dompere, to convey a consignment of war stores to Dompere.<sup>2</sup> But when Oben Daako arrived at Barto on the Volta, Dompere's position had been surrounded by the enemy.<sup>3</sup> On 23rd May Dompere reported that he had had to

1. Rev. Zimmerman (Odumase-Krobo) to Ellias Shrenk (Akropon), 17 May; Simpson to Kennedy, 20 May; Shrenk to Russell, Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts (Accra), 21 May 1869, CO.96/80; King and chiefs of Ada to Russell, 7 October 1869, CO.96/81. Other writers give 20,000-30,000, as the strength of Adu Bofuo's force. The present author has found no contemporary evidence to support the view that the army under Adu Bofuo formed the eastern-most column of a three-point impending Asante invasion of the Protectorate. Cf. Ellis (1893) p. 260; Claridge, Vol. I p. 276; Ward, History, p. 241. The only pieces of contemporary evidence nearest to this view are (a) the false and alarmist interpretation which Ada Chiefs put on Adu Bofuo's movements (Cf. King Dosu, Ada, to Russell, 30 August 1869; Dosu to Simpson, 7 October 1869, CO.96/81); and also a false alarm from Elmina Castle (cf. Colonel Boers to Simpson, 8 April 1869, enclosed in Simpson to Kennedy, 9 April 1869, CO.96/79.)

2. Simpson to Kennedy, 20 May 1869, CO.96/79.

3. Oben Daako (Barto) to Russell (Accra), 6 June 1869 CO.96/80.



beat a retreat before the enemy on account of the numerical inferiority of his army, and requested that the Administration should send him express reinforcement.<sup>1</sup> On 21st June he sent out another appeal for help in which he reported the fall of the town of Anum and the capture, by the Asante, of the Basel missionary Ramseyer, his wife and baby, and his colleague Kuhne.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of very great disadvantages, Dompree fought on bravely, disputing every inch of ground with the enemy. But this could not go on indefinitely. The enemy pressed in on him. In August he sensed that the end was not far, and informed Mr. Addo, an Accra merchant for the benefit of the Protectorate Government that

"the Ashantees and Aquamoos [have] fought me and the whole of the Crapees three times, and have driven us to Avarteam [Avatime] on top some hill - I beg therefore on the receipt of this [letter] you may be kind enough to tell the Governor and the Kings of Accra to send me immediate assistance to protect me and the whole [of] Crapee otherwise the land [of] Crapees is going to be taken by the Ashantees";

he added that the Krepi were contemplating to sue for peace by handing him over to the enemy.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear from all these messages that Dompree at this time regarded himself as nothing but a soldier in

- 
1. Dompree ("Afframay Camp") to Russell (Accra), 23 May 1869 C0.96/80.
  2. Dompree ("Jorkpee, Crepee") to Russell (Accra), 21 June. Cf. also same to same, 26 June; Windmann (Akropon-Akuapem) to Russell, 29 June 1869 C0.96/80.
  3. Dompree ("Agoteam" i.e. Agotime) to Mr. Addo, 27 August 1869, C0.96/81. Mr. Addo was one of the well known African merchants of Accra with business connections in the lower Volta area.

the employ of the British administration, defending Krepi which he felt was under British jurisdiction. At least the actions of Simpson had led him to regard Krepi as British territory. It was therefore unfair for Simpson to say on 16th July 1869 that Dompree had been foolish because he had not been asked to defend Krepi but to station himself at Barto on the Volta and that Dompree should blame himself if the enemy was closing in on him.<sup>1</sup> Worse, Simpson accused Dompree of selfishness:

"The Ashantees say that they fight only against Dompree, and not against the British Government. Is this, as I suspect, on account of the old palaver between them and Adjeman? If so, how can he expect me to follow him wherever he chooses to go - I am no friends with Ashantee, but neither can I justify to support one who leaves the Protectorate for selfish purposes of his own and seeks to fight over my shoulders his own independent quarrels."<sup>2</sup>

Simpson was absolutely correct in thinking that old enmity between Kotoku and Asante partly accounted for the involvement of both in the Volta conflict. But he just could not deny his own responsibility in getting Dompree thus far in the current predicament for which he was now blaming the Nsawam chief. Simpson was too honest a man to shirk responsibility, and had to admit that the implied refusal to continue to support Dompree was due to the disapproval of his measures by Freetown and the Colonial Office:

"Dompree is a good soldier if not a good citizen, and I would gladly have made use of him to increase the defensive strength of the Protectorate. The state of the country is deplorable enough, but unless I can satisfy my

---

1. Simpson to Oben Daako (Barto), 16 July 1869, CO.96/80, copy.

2. Simpson to Oben Daako, 16 July 1869, CO.96/80.

Government in Great Britain that we are in the right, I risk my own position by offering aid to your brother."<sup>1</sup>

This then was how confused British policy on lower Volta pushed the Akyem Kotoku Chief Dompre into war with an Akwamu-Anlo-Asante Alliance only to leave him in the lurch. Many historical accounts on the Gold Coast are replete with accusations, against the states and peoples, of barbarism, and a love for wars. There were occasions when European over-rule was responsible for some of the wars.

Deserted by the Administration in the thick of the war, Dompre and his small Akyem army had to battle with the formidable enemy as best they could. He became the main target of the enemy alliance. Asantehene Kofi Karikari resolved that either the British should give up Dompre or "else he will catch him at any price."<sup>2</sup> It was proof of Dompre's prowess that in spite of the great odds against him he continued to give stiff opposition to the powerful Asante army under Adu Bofuo.

Dompre's plight created a sense of unity in the entire Protectorate. Many recognized him as a patriot of the Protectorate. His predicament, the capture of the Basel Missionaries of Anum by Adu Bofuo, and the false but widespread alarm that Adu Bofuo intended to invade the Ga-Adangbe district after subjugating Krepi, aroused the entire Protectorate to assist Dompre in one way or another. The new Kotokuhene, Kwabena Fua, sent reinforcement to him, in spite of the

---

1. Simpson to Oben Daako, 16 July 1869, CO.96/80.

2. Zimmermann (Odumase-Krobo) to Shrenk (Akropon), 17 May 1869 CO.96/80 copy, Cf. also Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 4 September 1869 No. Akim 13, BMA-PJC.

Administration's refusal to supply this reinforcement with war stores.<sup>1</sup> Thus by his action the new Kotokuhene healed the nine-year old breach which had existed between the Ankobea Division and the Kotoku Court since 1860.<sup>2</sup>

Abuakwahene Amoako Atta I also raised a force of 5,000 strong to go to the aid of Dompere.<sup>3</sup> Though this army eventually did not reach the trans-Volta, Amoako Atta's gesture went a long way to improving Kotoku-Abuakwa relations which had become strained since 1860.<sup>4</sup> For just a year later (1870) representatives of the two Akyem states met at the Abuakwa town of Akaanten to perform a ceremony formally marking the end of the strained relations.<sup>5</sup> Under the aegis of the Mankesim Council<sup>6</sup> Assin and Fante showed moral support by tightening up the hitherto loose blockade of the Cape Coast - Kumasi trade route against Asante.<sup>7</sup> A group of scholars describing themselves as "Accra Gentlemen" took umbrage at Simpson's description of Dompere as a marauder.

1. King Gharthey (Winneba) to Simpson (CCC) 3 July; Simpson to Gharthey, 6 August; Simpson to Kennedy (SL), 7 August 1869 (CO.96/81). King Gharthey was then President of the Mankesim Council which had emerged in Fante to oppose the 1867/8 Anglo-Dutch exchange of spheres of influence.
2. See Chapter 8 pp. 266-7 above.
3. Simpson (CCC) to Kennedy (SL), 7 August and 30 October 1869 CO.96/81.
4. See Chapter 7 above.
5. Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 5 January 1871 No. Akim 19 (BMA-PJC). Cf. also pp. 255-6 above.
6. Alias the Fante Confederation.
7. Simpson to Kennedy, 7 August 1869 (CO.96/81).

They not only rejected the epithet as unfair but also declared Dompree as a devoted patriot who

"is really playing a very important part in the preservation of the Protectorate ..... It is essentially owing to the recent movements of Dompree that the Ashantees have hitherto been prevented from making further progress."<sup>1</sup>

In appreciation of Dompree's achievements the Ga set up a committee charged with raising funds and a force to assist the patriotic Akyem Kotoku army under him.<sup>2</sup> He even seems to have received at least moral support from the well known Dante Oracle at Krachi.<sup>3</sup> In short, as Simpson himself put it in October 1869, "the whole of the Eastern Districts were in arms against Ashantee."<sup>4</sup> What may have partly engendered this universal and enthusiastic outburst of support, material or moral, for Dompree was his signal victory over the Asante-Akwamu forces in a battle fought at the rocky hill of Gemi in the Amedzofe neighbourhood, in October 1869.<sup>5</sup> Before this spontaneous moral and material support could reach Dompree he had fought gallantly and managed to reach the Western bank of the Volta with the remnant of his small Akyem army.<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. "Accra Gentlemen" (possibly the African educated elite) to Simpson, 31 August 1869 CO.96/81.
  2. "Accra Educated Natives" to Simpson, 14 August; Simpson to Captain Lees (Accra), 21 August 1869 CO.96/81 Captain Lees was then the Commandant of the Eastern Districts.
  3. Marion Johnson, in Bulletin de l'Institut, p. 49.
  4. Simpson to Kennedy (SL), 3 October 1869 No. 117; cf. also same to same, 18 October 1869 No. 124; Zimmermann (Odumase-Krobo) to Simpson, 22 October 1869 CO.96/81.
  5. Claridge Vol. I p. 595; Ward, History, p. 265.
  6. Captain Lees (Accra) to Ussher (CCC), 16 December 1869 CO.96/84. Ussher had returned from Leave.

Ussher had then resumed duty as Administrator at Cape Coast Castle. He regretted Domppe's withdrawal from the Lower trans-Volta. The basis of Ussher's regret was a change of heart in Freetown and the Colonial Office. It had at last dawned on them that the military solution which Simpson had advocated was after all the best method to resolve the Volta Question. Ussher had therefore hoped to renew the governmental aid to Domppe, as soon as practicable. Domppe's departure from the Lower trans-Volta, he feared, might inspire Asante not only to subdue but to occupy the whole of Krepi.<sup>1</sup> The military approach was now all the more desirable because Geraldo de Lima had renewed or was just about to renew his hostilities from Anlo.<sup>2</sup> Ussher determined to salvage the deplorable situation by quickly signing on Domppe, once again, as a government soldier. Besides a small contingent from the West India Regiment, Ussher got the Ga Chiefs and the merchants in Accra to raise a force for an armed expedition into the Lower Volta basin; he next invited support from the British establishment in Lagos (Nigeria,) from where came the gun-boat HMS Eyo with troops under the command of Captain Glover. Together with Glover and the entire regular and indigenous forces, Ussher, in May 1870, sailed up the Volta to Barto with a view to consulting Domppe, without whose advice he would not proceed further with the armed expedition.<sup>3</sup> Both he and

- 
1. Ussher (CCC) to Kennedy (SL), 17 January No. 33 and 11 February 1870 No. 37, CO.96/84.
  2. Geraldo de Lima ("Vosve") to Mr. Addo (Accra), 4 April 1870, enclosed in Ussher to Kennedy, 6 April 1870 CO.96/84.
  3. Ussher's full Report, on the Expedition, to Kennedy, 8 July 1870 No. 90 CO.96/85. Published in part in Metcalfe, Documents pp.329-30. Captain Glover was the Administrator of the British Lagos establishment.

Glover found Dompree

"a competent man, and moreover most loyal to H.M. Government. The remarkable absence of ostentation and marked deference paid him to the position of the Kings did not fail to impress me with a high idea of him ...." <sup>1</sup>

In spite of the recent British betrayal, Dompree had no hard feelings against the British administration. He was still prepared to co-operate with it in an effort to find peace for trouble-torn Lower Volta basin. On 30 May 1870 he and Ussher signed a convention. The Convention stipulated that Dompree should

- "1. Charge himself with the defence of the left or eastern bank of the Volta; keeping open the communications for trade, with the duty of repelling, to the best of his ability, attacks from hostile tribes in the trans-Volta Districts.
2. That he receive instructions either from the Administrator direct, or through the Civil Commandant of Accra, and from none other. Should any interference be tempted by other Chiefs to report at once to the Commandant.
3. To use every means in his power to protect and keep open trade and communication in the Volta, and neither on his own behalf, nor on that of any other person, to permit toll or imposts to be levied on persons, merchandize or produce ascending or descending the river.
4. To confine his operations, as well as may be, strictly to the defence of his country and that of his allies, and to neglect no means to effect a permanent peace, and not to refuse to accept the submission of hostile tribes or bodies. He will, above all, refrain, by any ill advised measures, from prolonging the war, in the interest of selfish and disaffected persons.
5. In consideration of the faithful discharge of these conditions, and of his general desire to promote the welfare and foster the trade of the River Volta and the Eastern Districts, Dompree shall receive from Her Majesty's Colonial Government of the Gold Coast settlements, the sum of two hundred pounds sterling £200.00 per annum, paid quarterly in advance, in addition to such assistance from time to time in munitions of war and general necessities, as to the Officer administering the said Government shall deem fit.

---

1. Ussher's full Report, on the Expedition, to Kennedy, 8 July 1870 No. 90 CO.96/85.

6. It shall be lawful to the said Administrator, for misconduct or disobedience of instructions on Domprey's part, or for any other cause, to suspend for a time or permanently to discontinue the stipend and assistance above-mentioned to be given to Domprey.

7. It is to be understood by Domprey that in the event of a permanent peace being established by his aid, and by his obedience to the policy of the Gold Coast Government, his position at the close of the disturbances in the Eastern Districts shall, if possible, be better than before - and that in any case, the stipend of (£200) two hundred pounds sterling per annum, shall not be discontinued, in consideration of certain future services to be rendered by Domprey to the Government in protecting the interests of the Government in the Eastern Districts and River Volta.

8. This agreement to be subject to the approval of the Legislative Council of Cape Coast and of the Governor-in-Chief of the West African Settlements."<sup>1</sup>

Ussher signed for the government and Dompree, on his own behalf, put his mark to it. Those who witnessed to it were Captain W.J. Ross, the Acting Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts, Dr. Thomas Jones of HMS Eyo and Messrs. Lebrecht Hesse, Edmund Bannerman and William Addo.

Dompree, Ussher, and Glover then laid immediate plans to implement the first Clause of the Convention. The immediate concern was to subdue the Dafo and Volo completely in order to allow the smooth flow of trade on the Volta. Dompree would then be left to defend the Volta waterway and protect allies in trans-Volta against enemy attacks. The Dafo and Volo had the solid support of the Asante army under Adu Bofuo, Akwamu and Anlo. On 19th June the allies moved in on the enemy, with Dompree directing land operations

---

1. "Convention between His Excellency Herbert Taylor Ussher, Administrator of the Gold Coast Settlements, and Dompree, Commanding the Allied Accra and other Forces Defending the Eastern Districts and the Trans-Volta Districts," 31 May 1870 (at "Battoh"), CO.96/85, 1870 Vol. 2).



whilst Captain Glover took charge of the marine manoeuvres of the gun-boat, HMS Eyo. The Battle of the Volta began at 1 p.m. the same day, and in about two hours it was all over. Dompere and his land forces rushed in under the cover of the guns of HMS Eyo. The enemy put up a stiff opposition at the initial stages but was compelled to give in to the heavy onslaught from land and mid-stream. The carnage must have been horrifying. Ussher reported that of the fighting men of the Dafo and Volo not a man escaped.<sup>1</sup> Glover was more informative. According to him an Asante Captain, an Akwamu Chief, and all their followers, when they saw that the day was lost, "blew themselves up; of the men of Duffo and Voloe none remained;" and about three hundred of these people, mainly women and children, were taken captive.<sup>2</sup> So horrifying was the carnage that the Colonial Office queried the British West African administration for allowing the Gold Coast Administration to wage the war, in the first instance.<sup>3</sup> The losses of the Allies were put at "a few dead;" and a few wounded whom Dr. Jones of SS Eyo successfully treated.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Ussher (HMS Eyo on Volta) to Kennedy (SL), 22 June 1870 CO.96/85.
  2. Capt. Glover (HMS Eyo on Volta) to Kennedy, 22 June 1870 CO.96/85.
  3. Metcalfe, Documents, p. 330. The Colonial Office had only stipulated a demonstration and not a hot war.
  4. Ussher to Kennedy, 22 June 1870 CO.96/85. It is possible that Ussher and Glover exaggerated their account of the battle. Winwoode Reade, a British journalist who personally witnessed the Battle of the Volta suggests that only about thirty men, captained by an Asante chief, manned the island. Cf. African Sketch-Book, London, 1873, Vol. II, pp. 129-131; Claridge Vol. I p. 607. Claridge also gives the impression that it was the Ga alone who combined with the Hausa soldiers from Lagos to fight the Battle of the Volta.

Both Ussher and Glover were elated at the outcome of the expedition, and Ussher enthused that at long last the end to the Volta conflict was in sight. The indigenous allied forces clamoured for a direct invasion of Akwamu itself. The rationale behind the request for a direct invasion of Akwamu was that the enemy now had his back to the wall, having retreated into Akwamu, apparently to reassess the turn of events. Had the allies followed up the Battle of the Volta with an attack on Akwamu, the Akwamu-Anlo-Assante Alliance would have probably suffered a crushing defeat. Peace would have been restored completely to the Lower Volta. But Ussher and Glover thought the victory at the Battle of the Volta was enough to do this. Consequently on 27th June 1870 both men embarked on the Eyo for Accra, leaving Dompere to begin his role as a frontier policeman.<sup>1</sup>

The failure of the Allies to invade Akwamu itself allowed the Asante army, rather what was left of it, to linger on in the trans-Volta area, though it no longer had venom.

Paradoxically the success of the Volta expedition proved fairly disastrous for the Akyem Kotoku army in particular and the Eastern Districts in general. Petty internal jealousies among the Allies soon destroyed their sense of unity, proved a barrier to Dompere in his role as a frontier policeman, and eventually claimed his life barely a month after the expedition. One piece of contemporary evidence shows that Dompere was killed in a battle apparently against the enemy.<sup>2</sup> Writing in 1925, Welman was inclined to

---

1. Ussher (CCC) to Kennedy (SL), 4 July 1870 CO.96/85.

2. Kennedy (SL) to Kimberly (CO), 3 August 1870, GC No. 77, CO.96/85.

support this view, saying "Adu Boffo succeeded in defeating Dompri who met his death in battle in November or December 1870 at Akotia".<sup>1</sup> A Kotoku Stool tradition says it was the Ga who assassinated Dompri.<sup>2</sup> A Krepi tradition asserts that Dompri was ambushed by the Akwamu.<sup>3</sup> The assassination theory suggested by the two traditions seems to be nearer the truth. The Asante never claimed at that time, or after, that they defeated and killed Dompri in a battle. It is significant that both the African Times and the West African Herald, the latter an Accra newspaper, fully commented on what they called the untimely death of Dompri but failed, perhaps deliberately refused, to give details of the manner by which the Kotoku warrior chief came to meet his death.<sup>4</sup> There is reason to believe that the Adoagyiri tradition, however biased it may seem, is nearest to the truth. Ussher himself was suspicious of "the hot-headed and silly Chief of Accra, King Tackie" for "if any mischief arises, it will be from him", because he was a dangerous man and must not be trusted.<sup>5</sup> Ussher's opinion of Ga Mantse Tackie ties in well with the assassination theory. The Adoagyiri tradition remembers very well that it was "Nkranhene Takyi

- 
1. Welman, C.W. The Native States of the Gold Coast (London 1925) p. 14.
  2. AKT: Adoagyiri (1968/9). Cf. also Claridge, Vol. I p. 607.
  3. Claridge Vol. I p. 613 n.
  4. African Times, 24 October 1870; West African Herald, 31 March 1871.
  5. Ussher (CCC) to Kennedy, 8 July 1870, CO.96/85. This source is reproduced in parts by Metcalfe, Documents, No. 271 pp. 329-330.

(i.e. Tackie, the King of Accra) who bribed Domppe's wife, a Ga, to show how Domppe could be killed, since he seemed to possess a body that was bullet-proof.<sup>1</sup> There is a proverb in Akan - and probably in Ga too - which says literally that no one's walking stick is taller than himself. Domppe was a subordinate Akyem Kotoku chief whom the Ga had initially employed as a mercenary soldier. By signing the Convention of 31 May 1870 with him, Ussher had unwittingly elevated Domppe above his superiors. This obviously hurt not only the status and the personal pride of the Ga Mantse but also the ethnic feelings of the Ga people. It is reasonable to imagine the Ga, especially King Tackie, contriving Domppe's death. The conflict which subsequently developed between Kotoku and the Ga seems to point out that the Ga were the assassins.<sup>2</sup>

British reaction to the news of Domppe's death was sadness and<sup>a</sup> sense of loss as testified by the tributes they paid to the memory of that great Kotoku warrior chief. Kennedy, the Administrator-in-Chief of the British West African Settlements, thought

"the subsidy ..... promised to Domppey was a judicious outlay to a tried and influential man who would have acted as a Frontier Police, and would have had an interest in keeping peace. This war-chief who had just established a character for courage and loyalty has unhappily lost his life in a skirmish, being the only man of his party, killed or wounded."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. The tradition thus puts Domppe at par with Achilles of Greek mythology because the Kotoku warrior, like his Greek counterpart, could only be killed when shot at the heels.
  2. See p. 337 f. below.
  3. Kennedy to Kimberley (CO), 3 August 1870 GC No. 77, CO.96/85. The last bit of Kennedy's observation tends to reinforce the assassination theory.

Ussher was not outdone in the tribute paying exercise. He later presented to Oben Daako, Domppe's brother and successor, a marble plaque with the single inscription "DOMPREY" written on it.<sup>1</sup> These tributes were as they should be. Domppe was a dedicated collaborator with the British in their efforts to establish colonial rule in southern Gold Coast.

Domppe's untimely death adversely affected the efforts of the Administration to restore peace to the Lower Volta basin. Anlo was still hostile, possibly at the instigation of Geraldo de Lima.<sup>2</sup> Apparently the Asante army under Adu Bofuo took courage from the death of their arch bugbear and renewed their activities. This can be inferred from the strong accusation which the merchants in Accra in September 1870 levelled at the Administration that it had failed in its Volta policy.<sup>3</sup> Domppe's death may also partly account for Adu Bofuo's apparent relaxed attitude and implied agreement to a peace settlement, for he sent to Mr. R. Bannerman:<sup>4</sup>

"some important hostages as a pledge of his intentions to abandon hostilities and ..... as security for the rendition of the

- 
1. This plaque is carefully preserved at the palace, Adoagyiri, the town Domppe's people later founded when they abandoned Nsawam in early 20th century. It was shown to the present author in early 1969 when he visited the place to collect stool tradition.
  2. Amenumey, T.H.S.G. Vol. IX p.71f.
  3. Ussher (CCC) to Kennedy (SL), 5 September 1870 No. 117 CO.96/85.
  4. When leaving the Volta for Accra on 27th June 1870, Ussher appointed Mr. R. Bannerman as his representative.

captive missionaries"<sup>1</sup>

Asante stood in need of peace. The war had gone against it.<sup>2</sup>

By September 1870 the Allies had demobilized and were on their way back home. The peace moves from the Asante camp may have contributed to the demobilization. A greater contributory factor, however, was Domppe's death: it deprived the Allies of inspired leadership, and destroyed their sense of purpose. But by far the greatest effect of Domppe's demise was the conflict which it gave rise to between the Kotoku and the Ga. Aside from the loss of an excellent opportunity to carve a political prestige for themselves in the Gold Coast as a whole, the Kotoku of Nsawam sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Domppe. They became enraged at the assassination of their great warrior-chief, and determined to avenge his death on the Ga. Under Oben Daako, Domppe's brother and successor, and another Kotoku warrior-Chief called Asuman, the Kotoku army, which had campaigned in the Lower Volta, pursued the Ga to the outskirts of the Ga towns. They infested the Ga District and engaged in what was described as "a very irregular jurisdiction over the inhabitants ..... seizing and kidnapping in a very bold manner, and were otherwise guilty of violent acts."<sup>3</sup> Thus the

- 
1. Ussher (CCC) to Kennedy (SL) 11 October 1870 No. 145; cf also same to same, 5 and 12-September; Kennedy to Kimberley, 19 September 1870 CO.96/85. "Missionaries," i.e. Ramseyer and family and Kuhne.
  2. David Asante (Begoro) to Widmann (Kyebi), 7 March 1870 No. Africa 9, BMA-PJC. According to this source the Asante losses were many and it had not gained much. For identity of David Asante, see Chapter 8, p. 265 above.
  3. West African Herald, 31 March 1871.

Volta expedition which was intended to resolve the conflict in the Lower Volta area ended in still tearing the Eastern Districts further apart. The old friendship between Akyem Kotoku and Ga, much in evidence in the early 1860s and intensified in 1869, had, by 1870, broken down, each was at the other's throat.

As the scene of hostility was in their district the Ga felt the pinch more. Besides promoting insecurity to person and property, the activities of the Akyem Kotoku army blockaded the trade routes leading to Ga. The movements of the Kotoku were bad enough for trade. That put them in great disfavour with the British whom they had so loyally served very recently. Captain Lees was then the Civil Commandant of the Eastern Districts. He quickly concluded that military suppression of the Kotoku Army under Oben Daako and Asuman could be the best means to resolve the Kotoku-Ga conflict. In early 1871 he organized what was described as a firm armed expedition against the Akyem army now regarded as bandits.<sup>1</sup> Once again obedience and loyalty played the Kotoku army into the hands of the British administration. The army submitted without a fight. Apparently they did not want to defy the government. Their leaders gave themselves up. These included Oben Daako, Kwame Domphe Kuma, Kwame Afroten, Kwadwo Abokyi and Kwasi Buo. They were marched to Accra and put in custody to await court action against them.<sup>2</sup>

It is not clear exactly when they were brought to

---

1. West African Herald, 31 March 1871.

2. Ibid.

court, but the West African Herald of 31 March vividly described the scene at one stage of the court proceedings, a description which underlined the Akyem-Ga tension, and pointed to King Tackie's hand in Dompere's death. The Akyem 'prisoners' were charged with a breach of public peace.<sup>1</sup> "After hearing the prisoners who spoke well for themselves," said the West African Herald,

"his Honour ~~the~~ Magistrate directed the interpreter (Mr. Addo) to ask the native ~~Ga~~ Chiefs what they had to say. Upon this Tackie, King of Ussher town ..... spoke thus to the interpreter: 'Look here, tell our master (meaning the judge) that these people (meaning the prisoners) have been making war against the Ashantees and the Aquamoos, and have secured plenty of plunder, and we want a share, we must have it too, otherwise we shan't be satisfied, because we supplied the ammunition to fight. Besides, the Crepees have told us all about it. Therefore let's have our share at once.'

It is clear that if there was any skirmish in which Dompere was killed it was between Kotoku and Ga, and that it was over the division of booty from the Krepi campaign. The judge ignored King Tackie's request, but imprisoned Oben Daako and his colleagues for breach of public peace.<sup>2</sup>

Kotokuhene Kwabena Fua had no doubt in his mind that the imprisonment of his subjects was nothing less than a travesty of justice. But all he could do was to plead leniency for his subjects.<sup>3</sup> His petition had a favourable reception,

1. West African Herald, 31 March 1871.

2. Ibid.

3. "The Humble Petition of Quabinah Fuaah, King of Inswaarmoon And Its Dependencies" to the Administrator (CCC), 17 July 1871, C0.96/88. "Inswaarmoon" is obviously a wrong spelling of Nsuaem, i.e. Oda today. For a full text of the "Petition" see Appendix B. pp. 375-378 below.



however, it was not until December 1871 that Salmon, the Acting Administrator, detecting a miscarriage of justice, released Oben Daako and his colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

The imprisonment and release of Oben Daako and his colleagues must be seen as a long term effect of the 1860 war between Kotoku and Abuakwa. The war had produced a rift in Kotoku leadership, with the larger section, headed by the Kotokuhene, founding Nsuaem in western Akyem, and the smaller part headed by Dompere, establishing Nsawam on Akuapem territory. Dompere's residence here ultimately involved him in the violent trade and politics in the Lower Volta basin. Akwamu, old enemy of Kotoku, exploited his involvement as a pretext for seizing, robbing and killing a group of Kotoku subjects from Nsawam trading in the area of conflict. Dompere's determination to retaliate ultimately made Nsawam and Kotoku as a whole principal party in the Volta war. Though this led to British recognition of him as a man fit to be used in effecting a military solution to the district's problems, he paid dearly with his life. And when his countrymen tried to avenge his death on the Ga who assassinated him, they won for themselves the opprobrium of the very British whose proto-colonial interests they had attempted to promote.

---

1. C.S. Salmon (CCC) to Kennedy (SL), 13 and 15 December 1871, CO.96/92. This may well have been the time when according to Metcalfe, Kotokuhene Kwabena Fua, by virtue of a treaty signed on 21 December 1871, submitted to the British. Cf. Documents p. 746. If this treaty was meant to confirm Kotoku acceptance of British authority, then it was not necessary. Since 1852 the Kotoku had at no time revolted against British authority. Possibly Kotoku had been threatening rebellion following the imprisonment of the five Kotoku war captains in March 1871.

## CHAPTER 10

### AKYEM, ASANTE, AND THE BRITISH, 1871-1874

Akyem impact on political events in the Gold Coast did not stop with the disturbances in the Lower Volta District.<sup>1</sup> It also helped in shaping the cause, course, and consequence of the conflicts which engulfed the British and Asante during the period between 1871 and 1874. Hitherto events during this period have been seen largely in the light of Anglo-Asante relations. For example Asante invaded the Protectorate in the last days of 1872 and much of 1873. Since then there has been a general tendency among observers, both contemporary and subsequent, to attribute the cause of the invasion solely to British acquisition of Elmina Castle and town from the Dutch in 1872.<sup>2</sup> A close study of all available records shows unmistakably that strained relations between the Akyem states, particularly Kotoku and Abuakwa, on the one hand, and Asante on the other were a contributory factor. Nor has it ever been pointed out, much less emphasized, that the Akyem immensely contributed to the success of the counter-British invasion of Asante in 1874; or that the effects of these events on Akyem were as far

---

1. See Chapter 9 above.

2. Brackenbury, The Ashanti War, I, Chapter 2; Ramseyer and Kuhne, Four Years, Chapter XXV; Ellis (1893) p. 283; Casely Hayford, Native Institutions, pp. 157 & 242; Claridge, II pp.3-4; Rev. Balmer, Akan Peoples, p. 154; Ward, History, p. 269; Kimble, Political History, p. 270; Coombs, The Gold Coast, pp.121-127. Hargreaves, J.D. Prelude to the Partition of West Africa, London 1963, p. 167; Agbodeka, African Politics, pp. 44-7; Wilks, Asante, pp. 230-235.

reaching as they were on Asante and the British.

That the Dutch cession in April 1872 of Elmina Castle and town to the British was a cause of the invasion has been well established.<sup>1</sup> More recently it has been suggested that fundamentally Asante desire to regain its pre-1831 control over the southern states was another cause.<sup>2</sup> Available evidence also suggests that Akyem hostility against Asante was yet another cause. In fact the evidence shows unmistakeably that without the cession the Asante attack on the Protectorate would have occurred all the same.

Events in the Lower Volta district did not end the strained relations between Kotoku and Asante.<sup>3</sup> Relations rather worsened as the Western as well as the Eastern Akyem seized every Asante subject they could get hold of, obviously regarding such seizures as an aftermath to the Volta confrontation. The effect of this hostile Akyem activity against Asante was underlined by the Asantehene himself in January 1871 when he charged that:

"while the Assins were seizing and molesting my people on the main road to Cape Coast the Akims [i.e. Kotoku] on the other hand seriously were molesting and killing my people. Are the Akims not under Your Excellency's protection? Why are they suffered to sacrifice the Ashantees for their customs ..... May I ask my friend why should the Akims murder my subjects for nothing ..... I will ask Your Excellency that regarding the Akims, they now have in their possession more than one hundred of my people. May it please Your Excellency to send for them for my people, and if they refuse to deliver them, Your Excellency

---

1. See note 2 p. 341 above.

2. Boahen, in Ajayi & Crowder, Vol. Two p. 200.

3. Cf. Chapter 9 pp. 311-333 above.

will do me a favour to withdraw your protection from them and I will know how to get my people from those cruel and obstinate people."<sup>1</sup>

There was considerable justification in the Asante accusation. In mid-1871 when, in response to Asante importunities, Salmon appealed to the Kotokuhene to free all Asante subjects detained in Kotoku, at least twenty-nine of them were released.<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that Kotoku even threatened Asante with war. Kotokuhene Kwanbena Fua was accused of having sent one of the detained Asante to tell Manhyia of his intentions to fight Asante. This so angered the Asantehene that the Kumasi Court saw no reason why Asante should not accept the challenge.<sup>3</sup> The tension still prevailed in late 1871, for the Asantehene from time to time repeated his request to the British to ostracize Kotoku from the Protectorate so that Asante could go to war against Kotoku without violating its friendship with the British. King Karikari was the more bent on this because, as he said, the Kotokuhene boasted of his ancestry to Frimpon Manso, a suggestion that he Kwabena Fua enjoyed the tradition of warrior kings.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Asantehene to Ussher (CCC), 31 January 1871; cf also Ussher to Kennedy (Freetown), 17 March 1871, Confidential, CO.96/87. The Assin seized Asante subjects in support of Akyem Kotoku and others like Denkyera Wassa, Twifo and Komenda who were also at loggerheads with Asante.
  2. Salmon (CCC) to Kennedy (Freetown) 3 August 1871, No. 94, CO.96/89.
  3. Asantehene to Ussher (CCC), 31 January 1871, CO.96/87.
  4. Asantehene to Salmon, 1 September; Crawford (Kumasi) to Salmon, captioned "Minute Details of Interview with H.M. King of Ashantee", 7 August 1871, CO.96/89. Frimpon Manso was a powerful Kotokuhene who reigned from 1717 to about 1740. Cf. Chapter 2 p. 26f and Chapter 3 p. 79-III2 above.

There were occasional border clashes between Kotoku and the Asante palatine state of Kokofu.<sup>1</sup> Kumasi apparently may have regarded such clashes as a prelude to a general Kotoku plan to attack Asante.

Kotoku also seems to have claimed authority over certain portions of Asante subjects, possibly of Asante-Akyem district, and this angered Kumasi. This is suggested by Kumasi reference to a Kotoku claim, allegedly put forward by King Kwabena Fua, that during the reign of his predecessor, Agyeman, Asante seized one hundred Kotoku subjects. The Kotokuhene was reported to have threatened that if Kumasi did not return those Kotoku subjects he would order the panyarring of every Asante citizen he could catch.<sup>2</sup> Kotoku may have been guilty of all these charges. But it appears that Asante too was partly to blame for the tension. The Asantehene, Salmon detected, was looking for a chance to go to war with Nsuaem in order to make amends to the poor performance of Asante against Kotoku in the Krepi War.<sup>3</sup>

So serious was the tension between Kotoku and Asante that in December 1871 Salmon, the Administrator at Cape Coast Castle, felt that it must be resolved diplomatically, and quickly too, if war was to be averted. The solution of the problem lay in both Nsuaem and Kumasi. He advised the Asantehene to drop his complaints against Kotoku, and other Protectorate states, because even if the

---

1. Salmon to Kennedy 21 December 1871, printed in Br. PP. (1873) Vol. XLIX.

2. Salmon, citing the Asantehene, in Salmon to Kennedy 31 October 1871 No. 124. CO.96/89.

3. Ibid. For a full account of the Krepi War see Chapter 9 above.

alleged excesses of Kotoku and the others were true, they were a direct reaction to similar deeds Asante had committed against them, deeds which the Asantehene had not cared to condemn and denounce.<sup>1</sup> It was not enough to take the Asantehene to task and leave the matter to rest there. Salmon invited the Kotokuhene to come to Cape Coast to assist in investigations into the Asante charges against Nsuaem. King Kwabena Fua declined the invitation, pointing out that the attitude of Asante was hostile; this made it incumbent for him to be on the alert; if Asante relaxed its attitude, it would be possible for him to proceed to Cape Coast.<sup>2</sup> That the situation was quite explosive was reflected in early 1872 when the Kotokuhene declined a second invitation to go to Cape Coast for the projected investigation.<sup>3</sup>

The seriousness of the Kotoku-Asante tension was also emphasized by events in Asante itself. Ramseyer and Kuhne, the captive missionaries, and Bonnat, the French trader, also captive in Kumasi, noted Asante plans to invade the Akyem country as soon as the army under Adu Bofuo returned from Krepi.<sup>4</sup> The people of Asante-Akyem, however, revealed the plans to the Akyem states. Kinship

- 
1. Salmon to Asantehene 6 December; Salmon to Prince John Owusu Ansa (Kumasi), 7 December 1871 (Copy), CO.96/89.
  2. Report of Mr. Bentsil on a mission to Nsuaem, cited in Salmon to Kennedy 7 December 1871 No. 140, CO.96/92.
  3. Kotokuhene to Salmon, dd. "Akim Daa", 24 January 1872, CO.96/92. This is the earliest reference to Nsuaem as Da or Oda, known to the present author.
  4. Ramseyer and Kuhne, op. cit., p. 132. The missionaries wrongly called the first name of the Kotokuhene Kofi instead of Kwabena.

ties may have obliged the Asante-Akyem to divulge the secret.<sup>1</sup> But they paid dearly for the action: four of their chiefs were dragged to Kumasi and executed.<sup>2</sup>

Kotoku was not the only Akyem state hostile to Asante. Bosome and Abuakwa were equally unfriendly. For Bosome it was just not easy to sit on the fence while Kotoku, a close neighbour, was at loggerheads with Asante. An attack on Kotoku was bound to affect her on account of geography.<sup>3</sup> As for Abuakwa its bitterness against Asante compared with the Kotoku hostility against Kumasi. By 1869 enmity had replaced the entente cordiale which had characterised Abuakwa-Asante relations in the early 1860s. In that year King Amoako Atta was described as the most determined foe of Asante.<sup>4</sup> Excruciating British pressure on Amoako Atta explains the change.<sup>5</sup> Between 1869 and 1872 there was no thaw in the tension. In 1870 the Abuakwahene banned all Abuakwa sales of salt to Kwawu because the latter resold to Asante.<sup>6</sup> Besides, the Abuakwa, like the Kotoku and the Bosome, were wont to seize, rob, detain, and kill Asante subjects who fell into their hands.

---

1. See Chapter 5 above and pp. 357-8 below.

2. Ramseyer & Kuhne, op. cit. p. 183; Ellis (1893) p. 280.

3. See Chapter 8 p. 276 above.

4. Simpson (Accra) to Kennedy (SL), 22 March 1869 CO 96/79.

5. See Chapter 7 p.254 above.

6. David Asante (Begoro) to Widmann (Akropon), 7 March 1870 No. Africa 9; Schrenk to Basel, 26 August 1870, No. Christiansborg 31a, BMA-PJC.

In 1871 when the Asantehene appealed to him directly to release all Asante detainees in Abuakwa, King Amoako Atta insolently refused to comply. But for Salmon who, through a delegation of Fante chiefs, secured the release of the detainees, Asante would have immediately taken the field against Akyem Abuakwa.<sup>1</sup> In the third week of October 1871 Salmon proudly reported <sup>the</sup>normalisation of relations between Abuakwa and Asante.<sup>2</sup> But the improvement was more apparent than real. By April 1872 when the British formally took possession of Elmina Castle the evidence from Kyebi was that there was an order for the seizure of every Asante subject who could be found in Abuakwa; and that the exercise covered all Muslim visitors who were thought to be spies for Asante.<sup>3</sup> By the end of that year the Abuakwa were holding over eighty Asante subjects in detention.<sup>4</sup> If Asante did not officially remonstrate against Abuakwa it was just because she had decided on war as a better means of getting her grievances redressed.

Two issues, however, prevented Asante from effecting an immediate implementation of the attack. Negotiations were still going on between them and the British in connection with the release of the white captives. And there was the safety of the Resident Asante Commissioner for Elmina, Yaw Akyeampon,

---

1. Salmon to Kennedy, 3 October 1871 No. 108, CO.96/89.

2. Salmon to Kennedy, 19 October 1871 No. 119, CO.96/89.

3. B. Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 13 April 1872 No. 153, BMA-PJC.

4. Dr. Fox (Accra) to the Colonial Secretary (CCC) 16 January 1874; Administrator Harley's minutes on Fox's report, 24 January; Harley to Kimberley, 10 April 1874 (all printed in B. PP. 1874 Vol. XLVI).



to consider. These two issues were resolved in the last months of 1872. Akyeampon for example returned to Kumasi in the second week of December. The Asante Court now felt free to take up arms.

By the last week of December 1872 the advance guard of the Asante army had had skirmishes with the Akyem states.<sup>1</sup> On 29 December the Asantehene granted an interview to Mr. Joseph Dawson, an agent of the British who had been sent to Kumasi to assist Mr. Plange, another agent, in negotiating for the release of the captive whites in Kumasi. At this interview the Asantehene told Dawson that he would go ahead with his war plans unless Dawson obtained satisfaction for Asante. By satisfaction the King meant the British restoring the Akyem states, Assin, Denkyera and Wassa to Asante loyalty; British execution of Denkyerahene Kwakye Afram; and the return of Elmina castle and town to Asante allegiance.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the restoration of the Akyem and other states, the Kumasi Court had in fact made an earlier hint of it; that was in September 1872 when they told Plange that if Cape Coast Castle could not pay the ransom fee of £2,000.00 sterling which was demanded for the release of the white captives, Assin could be returned to Asante in lieu of payment.<sup>3</sup> Of course this was a deal the Asante themselves knew too well that the British would not entertain. Hence the determination to use force to achieve the same goal.

---

1. See p. 350 below.

2. Joseph Dawson (Kumasi) to CCC, 29 December 1872, Br. PP (Vol. 49 p. 878).

3. Plange (Kumasi) to CCC, 3 September 1872, (Br. PP. Vol. 49, 1873, p. 614).

In September 1872 the European captives in Kumasi noted that the Asantehene himself was inclined towards peace. But the Chiefs, by which they obviously meant the Kotoko Council, were bent on war, and were likely to force the hand of the King, in order to have the opportunity of recovering the Asante military prestige which had been tarnished in the Krepi war.<sup>1</sup> Of course a full recovery of this prestige could not be achieved without inflicting a defeat on those immediately responsible for that ignominy, namely the Akyem Kotoku. The missionaries and the French trader were, however, not too sure who the immediate object of the impending attack would be. In their published memoirs they asserted that to measure themselves with the white man for once was the secret desire of every Asante. From this premise they postulated the British acquisition of Elmina Castle as the cause of the attack.<sup>2</sup> Coombs for example had set much store by this evidence to lend weight to the cession as the sole cause of the Asante invasion.<sup>3</sup> It is, however, crystally clear from the evidence adduced above that strained relations between Akyem as well as other more interior Protectorate states, and Asante were an additional cause of the invasion. The Asantehene himself made this clear in March 1873 when he said that the British returning

- 
1. Kuhne & Ramseyer (Kumasi) to Pope Hennessy (CCC), 3 September 1872, B. PP 1873 Vol. XLIX p. 614. Pope Hennessy, the Administrator-in-Chief of the British possessions in West Africa was then on visit to the Gold Coast from Freetown, Sierra Leone.
  2. Ramseyer & Kuhne, Four Years, p. 205.
  3. Coombs, op. cit. p. 124.

"Denkerahs, Akims, and Assins back to their former position as subjects of Asante and also the British restoring the Elmina Fort and people back in the same manner as they were before, will be the only thing to appease Asante." <sup>1</sup>

No wonder then that the Akyem states were the first to be attacked by the Asante invading force; this was in the last days of 1872.<sup>2</sup> But it was in February 1873 that they, together with Denkyera and Assin and other parts of the Protectorate received the full force of the invader. The Akyem district was attacked by a column of the invaders headed by Yaw Nantwi, one of the Kumasi Chiefs.<sup>3</sup>

No further details of the war in Akyem appear in the records so far consulted. Circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that the encounter was brief. Judging from the attitude of Kotokuhene Kwabena Fua, the Akyem states had constantly been on the alert, and were therefore able to repulse Nantwi. This made it possible for the Akyem states later to send a force of between 3,000 and 4,500 strong to assist in the defence of Assin and Denkyera.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately Asante did not achieve the aim of the invasion. Worse still the attack led to a counter-invasion of Asante itself by the British and the Protectorate forces

- 
1. Asantehene to Harley (CCC), 20 March 1873, Br. PP: Further Correspondence respecting Ashantee Invasion, C 804. Joseph Dawson acted as Secretary to the Asantehene, Cf. also Metcalfe, Documents, p. 349.
  2. Harley to Asantehene, 24 December 1872; Abuakwahene to Harley, 11 January 1873, Br. PP: Papers Relating to the Ashante Invasion, pp. 388-9.
  3. Report of Dr. Rowe to Harley, ? February 1873, as Sub-Enclosure No. 10 in Pope Hennessy to Kimberley, 10 February 1873 No. 135; Evidence of Kwadwo Mensa before Foster, as Sub-Enclosure No. 6 of Enclosure No. 3 in Harley to Kimberley, 14 March 1873 No. 135, Br. PP: Papers Relating.
  4. Harley to Kimberley, 8 April 1873 No. 204, B. PP; Papers Relating; David Asante (Kyebi) to Basel, 9 July 1873 No. Akim 21, BMA-PJC; Ameyaw, Oda Tradition; AAT: Kyebi (1968/9).

in early 1874. The Akyem Abuakwa refer to this counter-attack as the Groba War.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, popularly known in Gold Coast history as the Sagranti War.<sup>2</sup>

The Sagranti War is well documented from Anglo-Asante view points. What is not so well known is the important role the Akyem states played to make it a success for the British and the Protectorate. Of all the states and peoples of the Protectorate the Akyem co-operated best with the British during the invasion. They alone constituted two of the four native columns which assisted the British attack on Asante. The British adopted the strategy of converging attack so familiar to and popular with Asante. Sir Garnet Wolseley, at the head of the main British regular forces of about 15,000, was to march directly on Kumasi, using the Cape Coast via Assin road. Captain Dalrymple had the command of the African forces comprising of Denkyera and Wassa, and was detailed to attack Asante from the middle reaches of the Ofin river. Captain Butler was given command of the Akyem Bosome-Kotoku force. His line of march was to cross the Lower reaches of river Birem in Western Akyem and then river Anuru after which he was to descend on the lacustrine Asante confederate states of Kokofu and Kontanase. Finally Captain Glover, assisted by Captain Sartorius, had the task of organizing a force from amongst the eastern districts and attack Asante from the direction of Akyem Abuakwa. Ultimately Abuakwa alone

---

1. Groba is a corruption of 'Glover', the name of the Captain who commanded them.

2. Sagranti is Akan corruption of 'Sir Garnet', the title and first name of Wolseley who had the overall command of the British invasion of Asante.

virtually made up this column.

There was a tendency to despise the conduct of the Akyem contingents and thereby play down their contribution to the success of the attack on Asante. For example they were accused of cowardice, untrustworthiness and despicable desertion.<sup>1</sup> What occasioned these damaging remarks ironically were their very efforts to make the British attack on Asante succeed. These efforts were geared towards a secret understanding between the Akyem forces and the Juaben section of Asante at a crucial stage of the War. The understanding came about in this manner. The Abuakwa forces, led by Glover and Sartorius, fought part of the Asante army at Juaso in Asante-Akyem on 24th January 1874. This section of the Asante army mainly consisted of that part of Asante-Akyem under the direct supervision of Kumasi.<sup>2</sup> Then there were the forces of the other section of Asante-Akyem under Juaben jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup> The bulk of the latter and the Juaben themselves were manning the Anuru river in the Odumase-Nnobewam neighbourhood. Glover and the Akyem Abuakwa joined battle with them on 31 January. These battles were indecisive. Glover hoped to attack again in the first week

- 
1. Wolseley (Fomena in Adanse) to Kimberley, 26 January 1874 Br. PP: Latest Despatches of Sir Garnet Wolseley, No. 6 Series; Glover (Obogu in Asante-Akyem) to Wolseley, 21 & 28 January and 4 February 1874; Butler (Trebe in Kokofu, Asante) to Wolseley, 2 February 1874, Br. PP: Further Correspondence; Butler, Akimfoo: A History of a Failure (London 1874) pp. 243-246; Ward, History, pp. 281-2.
  2. Kumasi-controlled section of Asante-Akyem consisted of Bompata, Agogo, Krofa, Adomfe, Wankyi, Juansa, Amantena and several other towns.
  3. Towns making this section of Asante-Akyem included Odumase, Konongo, Myabo, Nnobewam, Bomfa, Dwease etc.

of February. Then all of a sudden he became aware that the Akyem Abuakwa had started returning home. A few days later the Kotoku and the Bosome also did the same. The conduct of the Akyem so shocked Glover and Butler that they described the departure as a despicable flight at a crucial stage in the war.

But in reality the withdrawal was not a desertion as such; it symbolised a secret disengagement arrangement reached between Akyem rulers and the Juaben section of the Asante army. The whites were not told of this. Commenting on the cause of the departure of the Akyem forces Butler, in connection with Bosome and Kotoku, thought that

"the statements of a blind Ashanti prisoner taken at Mansuah, coupled with a verbal message sent by King /Amoako/ Atta of Eastern Akim, the purpose of which I was not made aware, did much to induce the disgraceful flight."<sup>1</sup>

The truth was that while the war was going on in the Asante-Akyem district there was a secret correspondence between the Abuakwahene and the Juaben leaders,<sup>2</sup> a situation which Glover found very odd.<sup>3</sup> The outcome of the contact was the disengagement agreement between the Akyem and the Juaben.<sup>4</sup> As the Akyem left the field, the Juaben also abandoned their post along the Anuru river and ultimately submitted

---

1. Butler (Trebe, in Kokofu, Asante), to Wolseley, 2 February 1874, B. PP: Further Correspondence.

2. Brackenbury, The Ashanti War, Vol. II p. 275.

3. H. M. Stanley, Coomassie and Magdala (London 1875) p. 183; cf. also Agbodeka, African Politics, p. 54.

4. Glover to Wolseley, 4 February 1874; Ellis (1893) p. 343.

to Glover.<sup>1</sup> Old friendship possibly induced the understanding. Both parties may have reminded themselves of the treaty of non-belligerency signed in or about 1840 which enjoined the Akyem Abuakwa and the Juaben never to take up arms against each other.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that the behaviour of the Juaben partly contributed to the defeat of Asante because, by refusing to fight on, the Juaben made it possible for a well-planned Asante strategy of resistance to miscarry.<sup>3</sup> There is substance in the suggestion because the Juaben departure enabled Glover to march through eastern Asante to Kumasi with only a handful of carriers without meeting with the slightest opposition from any quarter of eastern Asante. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Akyem (Abuakwa) diplomacy in Juaben partly contributed to the success of the British attack on Asante. This conclusion, however, does not lose sight of other contributory factors such as internal troubles in Juaben itself and the centuries old rivalry between Juaben and Kumasi.<sup>4</sup> The contribution of the Akyem states to the success of the attack on Asante becomes even more significant when it is realised that it was only after the defeat of Asante that the British felt easy in their mind to formally declare the Gold Coast a British colony. That was in July 1874.

---

1. Glover ("Essiema" i.e. Asienimpon) to Wolseley, 10 February 1874, in Stanley, Coomassie, p. 251 and Brackenbury The Ashanti War, Vol. II p. 264.

2. Cf. Chapter 6 p. 214 above.

3. Agbodeka, African Politics, p. 54.

4. I am grateful to Professor Adu Boahen of the History Department, University of Ghana, for drawing my attention to them.

Hitherto the effect of the war has been seen only from Asante and British view-points.<sup>1</sup> But its impact on the Akyem was considerable if not equally great. Following the war the population of the district increased and a new state came into being. Let us examine the first point. Just before, and during, as well as some twelve months after the attack, numerous "refugees" arrived in Akyem from Asante. In or about March 1874 the Asantehene described the "refugees" as secessionists responding to the incitement of Abuakwa and Kotoku rulers.<sup>2</sup>

The view of the Asante monarch was not wholly correct. Some of the so-called secessionists were full-blooded Akyem citizens who had been resident in Asante for several decades. This category had found their way there either as prisoners-of-war or as part of the annual tribute which Akyem states used to pay, in slaves, during the pre-1825 period, and had become domestic slaves or manumitted members of Asante families. Others had gone there in the early 1840s, having been drawn there by marital and other social connections with the Juaben.<sup>3</sup> As soon as rumours began to circulate that the British might invade Asante, hundreds of these Akyem residents in Asante decided to return home, and many did.<sup>4</sup> This class of migrants cannot be described as secessionists. It was probably for their sake that the administration at Cape Coast Castle decided

---

1. Ward, History, pp. 284-6; Agbodeka, African Politics pp. 77-103.

2. Maxwell (CCC) to the Earl of Kimberley (CO), 19 March 1874, Br. PP: Further Correspondence on the Ashantee Invasion.

3. See Chapter 6 p. 213 above.

4. Lodholtz's Report on the Basel Mission Station at Kyebi for the 1st Quarter of 1873, dd. 29 April 1873 No. Akim 6; David Asante (Kyebi) to Basel, 29 April 1873 No. Akim 20 BMA-PJC; AAT: Begoro, Kwaben, Pamen, and Ekoso (1925/6).



in July 1874 not to interfere, much less compel, any of the "migrants" already in Akyem to go back to Asante.<sup>1</sup> To have done so would have meant consigning Akyem citizens indefinitely to an 'alien' rule under which some of them would have remained slaves as long as independent Asante existed.

Another group of people who experienced family reunion was a number of inhabitants from the eastern and south-eastern district of Asante, that is to say Asante-Akyem. Large numbers of these people flocked into Akyem after the Sangranti War. Akyem instigation was held up as the cause of the migration from Asante-Akyem.<sup>2</sup> The position of this group of "migrants" to Akyem was not as simple as the charge of defection suggests. Nor could Abuakwa and Kotoku be wholly blamed for their flight into Akyem. It will be recalled that until the 1820s the Asante-Akyem district had formed part of the kingdom of Kotoku.<sup>3</sup> Political and military pressures from Asante in the 1820s, however, had forced the Kotoku dynasty and a large section of their subjects to migrate to and settle in Akyem south of the Birem. Those who for one reason or another were not able to migrate had looked forward to the day they would once again reunite with their migrated

- 
1. Governor Strahan (CCC) to Canarvon, 3 July 1874, B. PP: Further Correspondence.
  2. Maxwell (CCC) to Kimberley, 19 March 1874, B. PP: Further Correspondence; Maxwell to King Ampako Atta I, 31 March 1874, ADM 1/7/10, cited by Addo-Fening, in THSG, Vol. XIV Pt.2, p. 216, n. 17.
  3. See Chapter 5 pp. 192-193 above.

kinsmen.<sup>1</sup> To these, the 1874 war offered an opportune moment to flee and join their kinsmen in the south. Maxwell, the Acting Administrator, was not averse to seeing Asante go on the rocks, as he clearly indicated in his letter of 19th March 1874, which has already been cited. But with respect to the Asante-Akyem 'refugees' he did try to persuade them to go back home. In May 1874 he appointed Dr. Skipton Gouldsbury as a Special Commissioner for Akyem, and instructed him to go to the Akyem country and ask the Asante-Akyem refugees to return home. Gouldsbury was also to tell Abuakwahene Amoako Atta and Kotokuhene Kwabena Fua not to incite any defection from Asante-Akyem, or from any other part of Asante, as charged by the Kumasi Court.<sup>2</sup> Gouldsbury met the bulk of the refugees in Akyem Kotoku. At Nsuaem (now Oda) the spokesmen of the Asante-Akyem refugees admitted that they had indeed

"escaped from Asantee during the British expedition; but they had returned to their families in Akyem; and that ..... their recent escape was the realization of a hope which had been handed down to them from their fathers and which had grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength." <sup>3</sup>

They therefore had no intentions to go back to Asante, even if the Cape Coast government forced them.<sup>4</sup> Given the

---

1. AS-AKT: Bompata (1968/9).

2. Report of Dr. S. Gouldsbury on a mission to Akyem in May-June, 1874, dated Elmina Castle, 12 July 1874, CO.96/112.

3. Report of Dr. S. Gouldsbury on a Mission to Akyem in May-June 1874, dated Elmina Castle, 12 July 1874, CO.96/112.

4. Ibid.

historical background of Asante-Akyem there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Gouldsbury's report. By migrating to Akyem these people were not merely trying to substitute British protection for Asante domination. Many, if not all, of them were attempting to reunite with relatives in Akyem from whom they had been separated for about half a century. To them the fact of coming under British authority was only incidental to this aspiration; and whatever adverse effect their migration could have on the Asante Kingdom was equally inevitable. The very name Asante-Akyem given them pointed to their incomplete integration with Asante.<sup>1</sup> It was natural that the Akyem states, especially Kotoku, should welcome the refugees from Asante-Akyem.

It is, however, true that the Akyem states incited secession from Juaben, and to a less extent Kwawu.<sup>2</sup> Since 1742 when the Akyem empire of which they had formed part fell, Kwawu had faithfully remained part of provincial Asante. They were the only people in the south who did not make use of the 1824-1831 upheavals to recover their independence from that power. Now in 1874 they decided to part ways with Asante. Giving his reason for that decision the Omanhene of Kwawu in April 1874 said that he and his people

- 
1. During my field work in 1968/9 to collect oral traditions, I was told at Bompata that some of the inhabitants of that Asante-Akyem town still retained family ties in Kotoku. And there still is a family at Hwedien, also in Asante Akyem, members of which are linked with the Kotoku royal family.
  2. Maxwell to Kimberley, 19 March 1874, B.PP; Maxwell to Abuakwahene Amoako Atta I, 31 March 1874, ADM 1/7/10; Ag. Administrator CC Lees to Amoako Atta I, 12 May 1874, ADM 1/7/10, both cited by Addo-Fening, in THSG, Vol. XIV Part 2 p. 216 notes 17 and 19.

had suffered much from Asante.<sup>1</sup> Kwawu may have had its share of Asante oppression, but the real reason for its intention to withdraw from the Asante polity was that the people were impressed by the Anglo-Akyem victory over Asante in the Sagranti War. Hitherto many of the subject states had regarded Asante as invincible. Its defeat demonstrated the victors as a power more worthy to be served. It was for this reason that many Kwawu subjects migrated into Akyem (Abuakwa) with intentions of making a permanent home there; it was for the same reason that Abene<sup>2</sup> sent an official delegation to Abuakwahene Amoako Atta, appealing to him to use his good offices to seek admission for Kwawu into the Protectorate.<sup>3</sup> Kyebi obliged, though for reasons not readily known, Kwawu did not immediately become a member of the Protectorate. From 1874, however, Kwawu considered itself as no longer under Asante. Abuakwa probably encouraged this attitude in Kwawu, judging from the activities of Abuakwahene Amoako Atta in Juaben.

Akyem subversion against Asante was most conspicuous in relation to Juaben. After the withdrawal of the British and Protectorate forces from Asante, Kyebi and Nsuaem incited Juaben to secede from the Asante polity.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. David Asante (Kyebi) to Basel, 29 April 1874, BMA-PJC.

2. Capital of Kwawu.

3. Gouldsbury's Report, 12 July 1874, CO.96/112.

4. The Asantehene, cited in Maxwell to Kimberley, 19 March 1874, B.PP: Further Correspondence. Cf. also Juaben Tradition, in Rattray, Ashanti Law, p. 175.

The charge against Abuakwa and Kotoku seems to have been well-founded. For one thing many of the Juaben started arriving in Akyem, especially Abuakwa, soon after the withdrawal of the British forces from Asante: these Juaben refugees openly spoke of their plans to secede from Asante.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that the plan of secession had been agreed upon by Abuakwa and Juaben leaders during the negotiations leading to the disengagement between them in January and February.<sup>2</sup> Kyebi efforts in 1875 to support Juaben in a civil war with Kumasi substantiates this suggestion. As soon as the Kumasi-Juaben war broke out in the last days of October and early November 1875 Amoako Atta sent to inform the Government that his kingdom was being threatened with an invasion from Asante: the government should therefore supply him with war stores to enable him defend his borders. These were sent but the Government soon realised that Amoako Atta was rather planning to attack Asante (i.e. Kumasi) forces, apparently in support of Juaben. The Government therefore quickly sent Hausa troops to Abuakwa with orders to prevent him from carrying out his plans.<sup>3</sup> The British took this step apparently for fear that Kumasi might cite it as proof of British violation of the Fomena Treaty of Peace.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. David Asante (Kyebi) to Basel, n.d. No. 213, BMA-PJC; cf. also "The History of New Juaben and the relation between the Chiefs" (Enclosure) in ADM IV 1437, cited by Addo-Fening, THSG Vol. XIV, p. 217, n. 22.

2. Cf. p. 353 above. Initially the British also encouraged the Juaben secession. Cf. Agbodeka, African Politics, pp. 78-103.

3. Strahan to Carnarvon, 6 and 13 November 1875; Minutes on the 6 November despatch, dated 14 December 1875, CO.96/116; cf. also Agbodeka, African Politics, p. 108.

4. The treaty was signed between the British and Asante on 13 February 1874 to end the Sagranti War.

The Juaben were defeated by Kumasi.

The Juaben defeat had very far reaching consequences for the Akyem district in general and Abuakwa in particular. In 1875 a large number of the Juaben, led by Chief Asafo Agyei, fled to Abuakwa for asylum and Akyem military assistance against Kumasi. Amoako Atta gave shelter to the Juaben refugees. Besides, he was determined to assist Asafo Agyei in fighting against Kumasi. Aided by Ga and Akuapem rulers, he helped the Juaben to build up arms caches in preparation for further war with Kumasi.<sup>1</sup> The British colonial government severely reprimanded Amoako Atta and the other rulers for their conduct.<sup>2</sup>

The reprimand symbolised a change in British policy in relation to Asante. Until the October 1875 civil War in Asante this policy had had the disintegration of Asante as its goal, cleverly using Juaben as a tool. With the Kumasi victory over Juaben such a policy was no longer tenable. The Kumasi success was proof of Asante resilience which, if not handled with care, might well lead to another war with that power. Akyem continued subversion against Asante could easily be seized upon by Kumasi as a pretext for a fresh war. And the British do not seem to have had the heart for another war with Asante coming so soon after Sagranti. It was to prevent such a war that the British ultimately exiled Asafo Agyei and a few of his councillors to Lagos in Nigeria in 1877.

The repressive measures which the British took

---

1. Strahan to Canarvon, 16 November 1875, CO.96/116.

2. Agbodeka, African Politics, pp. 83 & 108.

against the Juaben in Akyem did not relieve Abuakwa of the problems created by the Juaben refugee presence in the territory. Nor was the British colonial administration prepared to return the refugees to Asante, in spite of its exile of Asafo Agyei. In response to British appeals, and of course by virtue of their earlier support for Juaben the Akyem Abuakwa were obliged to grant to the Juaben refugees a piece of land between Kukurantumi and the border with Akuapem which was virtually uninhabited. The Abuakwa generosity enabled the refugees to found in the last days of 1875 a state which they called New Juaben with its capital at Koforidua.<sup>1</sup> Thus the New Juaben State today is a living testimony to the role of the Akyem in the upheavals which engulfed the Gold Coast in the early 1870s.

Between the last days of 1872 and 1873 Asante invaded the Protectorate. Opinion then and later was that the Dutch cession of Elmina Castle and town to the British in early 1872 engendered the invasion. But it is now clear that strained Akyem-Asante relations dating back immediately to 1871 and remotely to the 1860s constituted another cause; that on this account the invasion would have taken place with or without the cession. Perhaps it was on that score that the Akyem, of all the Protectorate peoples, co-operated best with the British in the counter-invasion of Asante itself in early 1874. The wars had very far reaching effects on the Akyem district and its inhabitants, among these the founding of the new Juaben State in Eastern Akyem.

---

1. Ramseyer, Werner & Weimer (Kyebi) to Basel, 3 January 1876, BMA-PJC.

## APPENDIX A

### GOVERNMENT IN AKYEM : THE ABUAKWA EXAMPLE

The view prevailed in the late nineteenth century that government in Akan states ~~was~~ "absolute monarchy in which the King or Chief has unlimited power" over "the life and property of his subjects".<sup>1</sup> This view is not borne out by the evidence on the Akyem states, at least during the nineteenth century. An Akyem monarch could indulge in acts which at first sight might seem tyrannical and dictatorial, for example ordering the execution or the confiscation of the property of a "subject". But absolutism could scarcely be ascribed to him: the constitution, the nature of internal administration, and the system of owning land, which was the basis of all property and wealth in Akyem, and several other limitations on his power, allowed the monarch little or no room to be absolute. Government in Abuakwa will be used to illustrate this point, but where there is any difference between what obtained in Abuakwa and the other two Akyem states, this will be noticed and explanation offered if possible.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Reindorf, History, pp. 103 & 105.

2. Contemporary evidence is more available on government in Abuakwa than Kotoku or Bosome. Hence its selection as an illustration. The present author, however, does not intend the discussion here to be regarded as a detailed dissertation on governmental and administrative structures in pre-twentieth century Akyem states, but as an introduction to the subject which requires further and wider research.



Evidence on Abuakwa of our period of study is at present very scrappy, but it shows clearly that the Abuakwahene was a constitutional monarch. The outstanding feature of the constitution of this state, in the nineteenth century at least, was its system of checks and balances which was undoubtedly aimed at preventing the monarch from becoming a dictator and hold the people to ransom.<sup>1</sup> As the sole head of state the monarch alone reigned, but he governed the country with the assistance of three councils. These were the State (or Okyeman<sup>2</sup>) Council, the Kyebi Council and the Amantoo-mmienza Council.

The State Council was the 'national' assembly, since its membership consisted of the ruler, the five divisional chiefs, the chief of every town and village in the state, all the members of the Kyebi and Amantoo-mmienza Councils most of whom were chiefs, and any person who was thought fit, by the people, to sit on their councils. The State Council invariably met at the palace in Kyebi.<sup>3</sup> It played the tripartite role of a legislature, a court of justice (in which capacity it could be a court of first

- 
1. For a useful description of the Abuakwa constitution in the twentieth century see Danquah, Akan Laws, especially pp. 11-20.
  2. The Abuakwa sometimes use the term "Okyeman" in reference to the State Council or the Abuakwa state. The term literally means all Akyem. The present author has refrained from using it to avoid ambiguity and vagueness, as it does not apply to the other two Akyem states.
  3. The contemporary observers never used the term "State Council" but you readily know the reference is to that State Council whenever they mention "a large gathering" or "assembly" of chiefs, from all parts of the country, including "the five main under-chiefs" three of whose names were often mentioned, namely "Ampao", Chief of Kukurantumi, "Feni" of Begoro, and "Duodu" or "Duedu" of Asiakwa.

instance and an appellate), and a sort of an electoral commission. In 1865 and 1869 "the Akim people", as this Council was then described, sitting as a court of justice, adjudicated in a stiff land dispute between the towns of Kukurantumi and Asafo (supported by Asiakwa and Maase).<sup>1</sup> In 1867 it acted as an electoral commission to confirm the selection of the woman Sakyeraa as the new Abuakwahene, in succession to Atta Obiwom who died in or about May 1867; Sakyeraa ultimately declined the offer in favour of Kwasi Kuma, the fourteen-year old son of her younger sister, Ampofowaa.<sup>2</sup> The council, whether it sat as a legislative assembly, a court of justice, or an electoral commission, was the highest political authority in the state: It was,

"before the advent of the all-masterful Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883, the greatest council whose decision was ever final on King, prince, or subject and imperative on native, stranger or foreigner who set foot in the kingdom of Akim Abuakwa."<sup>3</sup>

The execution of its decisions, laws, edicts, rules and regulations devolved on the King assisted by the Kyebi Council. The King was thus the Chief Executive.

The Kyebi Council<sup>4</sup> consisted of selected "elders" or

---

1. Christaller (Kyebi) to Basel, 30 September 1865, No. Akim 25; Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 31 December 1865, No. Akim 31 and 29 January 1869 No. Akim 1, BMA-PJC.

2. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 7 and 14 July 1867, No. Akim 4, BMA-PJC. It appears that Sakyeraa was then the Queen-Mother because Dokuwa died in or about 1856.

3. Danquah, Akan Laws, p. 14.

4. The sources often said "the elders" of Kyebi in reference to the Kyebi Council.

councillors and counsellors who normally resided in Kyebi, the capital, and could, by that fact, readily make themselves available to assist and advise the Abuakwahene as (a) the Chief Executive of the state and (b) the Kyebihene or Chief of the Kyebi metropolitan district. Most of the "elders" were on the council by virtue of their positions as heads of their several mmusua (clans) in the capital. As such they held their positions as "elders" in spite and despite of the monarch. He could unseat them, as councillors, only with the co-operation and consent of the mmusua of which the "elders" were heads, as well as with the approval of the other members of the Kyebi Council. In 1868 King Amoako Atta I could not remove Kwasi Amoako from the council because the other members thought the measure was not commensurate to the grievance or offence for which the King sought to unseat Kwasi.<sup>1</sup>

The King could co-opt to sit on the Kyebi Council anybody of his own choice, as happened in 1870 when King Amoako Atta I made the head of the muslims in Kyebi a member of the council.<sup>2</sup> This type of councillor could be removed by the King at any time. But if the King arbitrarily sought to do the same to the "customary" councillor, then he ran the risk of destoolment. He faced the same danger if, without just grounds, he tried to remove a member of the State or the Amantoo-mmiensa Councils, or persistently and unduly showed disrespect to his elders.

The main members of the Amantoo-mmiensa Council<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 3 October 1868, No. Akim 10, BMA-PJC.
  2. Kromer (Kyebi) to Basel, ? October 1870, No. Akim 13, BMA-PJC.
  3. Whenever the contemporary observers (who were usually the Basel Mission personnel in Kyebi) mentioned "chiefs from the three neighbouring towns of Apapam, Tete and Apedwa" then the Amantoo-mmiensa Council was meant.

were the chiefs of the three towns of Apapam, Apedwa, and Tete and their followers. This is the only Estate in the Abuakwa constitution which did not occur in those of the other Akyem states. The circumstances surrounding the origins of this council (p. 188) no doubt explains the difference. The Council could sit as a court of justice, but only in conjunction with either one or both of the other two councils already mentioned. In 1868 it was invited to assist the Kyebi council to decide the case in which the Abuakwahene had complained against the elder Kwasi Amoako for allowing Doku of the Amoako household to assault the King.<sup>1</sup> The Council also helped the Kyebi Council in 1877 to determine the case, the King v. David Asante, the Akuapem born Basel missionary then working in Kyebi.<sup>2</sup>

The council was described in 1928 as being primarily the watchdog of the Abuakwa constitution; with a customary right to censure the Executive, i.e. the King and the Kyebi Council, and that the State Council looked to it "for direct information on the true state of things in regard to actual results of the work of the administration".<sup>3</sup> Evidence is currently lacking but this was most probably the council's primary role in the nineteenth century. After all it seems to have come into being in the 1820s when the chiefs of Apapam, Apedwa, and Tete, who came to constitute the council, had

- 
1. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 3 October 1868, No. Akim 10, BMA-PJC. The alleged assault happened in the palace one evening when Doku was waving his hand without being aware that anyone was in his way and his hand accidentally hit the king.
  2. David Asante to Basel, 20 September 1877, No. 231, BMA-PJC. See pp. 263-4 for a detailed discussion on the missionary-monarch conflict.
  3. Danquah, Akan Laws, p. 17.

opposed the foreign policy of the monarchy in relation to Asante.<sup>1</sup> Democracy, both in theory and practice, was clearly the hall-mark of government in Abuakwa. Without just grounds, as seen and determined by the State or the Kyebi or the Amantoo-mmienza Council or the joint session of any two or all three of them, the Abuakwahene could not and would not arbitrarily dispossess a free-born native of Abuakwa of his life and property.

Besides the constitution, the local government system in Akyem states also did not allow ample room for the King to become absolute. For example an Abuakwa native who did not hail from Kyebi owed allegiance first and foremost to the chief of his locality, and through the latter to the Abuakwahene. As long as his conduct did not in any way jeopardise the security of the whole state, as long as he was not guilty of any offence directly against the King which might warrant his being summoned to explain himself at the Kyebi Court, the King could have no direct access to him: he was answerable only to his local chief.

A subordinate chief could unilaterally terminate, temporarily or permanently, his allegiance to the monarchy. After the 1860 Abuakwa-Kotoku war, a Kotoku chief transferred his allegiance to the Abuakwa Stool, and the Kotokuhene could not force him back to the fold.<sup>2</sup> This right of the subject to transfer his allegiance acted as a sanction against royal absolutism and forced the King to exercise extreme caution in relations between him and his subjects, especially where the

1. See pp. 187-8 above.

2. Lodholtz (Kyebi) to Basel, 5 January 1871, No. Akim 19, BMA-PJC.

life and property of the latter were at stake.

Land, slaves, and gold were the bases of property and wealth in an Akyem state. Ownership of land in the state was not the exclusive preserve of the monarchy.<sup>1</sup> He was not even the greatest land-owner. In post-1783 Abuakwa for example, it seems that the Tafohene, the Asamankesehene, and especially the Oseawuhene of Wankyi were the great land-owners.<sup>2</sup> The land-owner could dispose of his land as he thoughtfit without the prior approval of the King. Between 1860 and 1863 the Oseawuhene (or the Wankyihene), one of the five divisional chiefs of Abuakwa, gave the Kotoku ruling house part of Wankyi land to settle on, though the Abuakwahene was at odds with the Kotoku.<sup>3</sup>

The King enjoyed only a customary and nominal jurisdiction over all land in the state.<sup>4</sup> This arrangement was <sup>then</sup> underlined by the custom whereby the King was entitled to one-third share in gold nugget, which was over nine dollars in value, found in any part of the state; the remaining two-thirds were split by the finder or miner and the owner

1. Christaller (Kyebi) to Basel, 30 September 1865, No. Akim 25 and 28 March 1866, No. Akim 4, BMA-PJC.
2. The Okyeremma (drummer) of the Tafohene used to emphasize, and still emphasizes, the claim of the town of Tafo to own large expanses of land in his drum language, "Kuro wo asa-se" (Tafo is a great land-owner).
3. Cf. Chapter 8 p. 269 above.
4. It was not until as late as 1939 that the Abuakwa State Council officially vested the ownership of all land in Abuakwa jointly in the traditional owners and the Abuakwahene.

of the land on which the find was made.<sup>1</sup>

This entitlement of the King to the one-third part of gold nuggets was a major source of revenue to the monarchy, because asikadie (gold digging and washing) was a principal occupation in Akyem.<sup>2</sup> Other main sources were fines for which the King "has a set of heavier gold weights";<sup>3</sup> trading; and stool lands.

The ruler was expected to spend money from public coffers with great care, and to protect stool property. He ran the risk of being destooled if he was a spendthrift.

Extravagance and prodigality were only two of several causes of destoolment in the Akyem states.<sup>4</sup> The monarch could be deposed if his general policy brought disaster and unhappiness to the people. In 1812 Abuakwahehene Asare Bediako was destooled and asked to commit suicide, which he did, for waging a disastrous war with the Ga.<sup>5</sup> He could also be deposed for drunkenness. King Atta Obiwom (1858-1867) was threatened with deposition on several occasions for habitually getting drunk.<sup>6</sup> That he would have

1. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 14 July 1868, No. Akim 8, BMA-PJC.

2. See p. 218 above.

3. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 14 July 1868, No. Akim 8, BMA-PJC.

4. Danquah (Akan Laws, pp. 115-124) lists the various grounds of destoolment in Abuakwa.

5. See p. 117 above.

6. Stromberg to Basel, 28 May 1861, No. Akim 8; Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 5 May 1862, No. Akim 7; Stromberg (Kyebi) to Basel, 2 March 1863, No. Akim 2, BMA-PJC.

been destooled if he had not paid heed to the warnings is indicated by the experience of Fenin. In 1873, Fenin, Benkumhene of Abuakwa and Begorohene, was deprived of his office after his subjects had <sup>vainly</sup> warned him many times to stop getting drunk always.<sup>1</sup> A ruler who contracted leprosy or a disease of that type was liable to deposition. This happened to Abuakwahene Atta Panin in 1858. He committed suicide by drinking the gall of a crocodile.<sup>2</sup> Apparently he had been asked to step down, a request which amounted to destoolment.

The Abuakwa stool scarcely remained vacant for long. Soon after the demise or deposition of a ruler, the Queen-Mother, as the mater-familias of the royal clan of Kyebi, would nominate one of the members to be enstooled as the new Abuakwahene. If her choice met with the people's approval, then the formal installation quickly followed. But if the people, as represented by the three councils mentioned above, rejected the nomination, then the Queen-Mother would make a fresh choice, or even choices, till the people were satisfied with her choice.

Every member of the royal clan, man or woman, was eligible to be elected, provided he or she had attained their majority. Danquah made the perceptive remark in 1928 that besides the will of the people, the character and personal influence of the candidate were also vital for a successful election. The Akyem tried to obtain easy and smooth succession by instituting the abediakyire system. This was the practice of recognizing one of the members of the royal clan

---

1. Haas (Kyebi) to Basel, 19 July 1873, No. Akim 9 BMA-PJC.

2. Christaller (Kyebi) to Basel, 1 October 1866, No. Akim 22, BMA-PJC.



as heir- or heiress- apparent to a reigning monarch. Between 1728 and 1742 Owusu Akyem was heir-apparent to Abuakwahene Baa Kwante.<sup>1</sup> To all intents and purposes he would have succeeded to the stool if he had not died together with Baa Kwante in battle against Asante in 1742. He virtually conducted the foreign policy of Abuakwa during Baa's reign.

"Kwabena Fa" (Fua) was abediakyire to Kotokuhene Kofi Agyeman (1825-1867).<sup>2</sup> He succeeded to the Kotoku stool when Agyeman died in 1867.

It must be pointed out, however, that an abediakyire did not automatically ascend the stool. Bad character could stand between him and the stool, as the experience of Asase shows. He was recognized as heir-apparent to the Abuakwa stool during the reign of Atta Panin (1842-1858). When Panin died in 1858 Asase was passed over, on account of his bad character, and Panin's twin brother, Obiwom, was enstooled.<sup>3</sup> This right of the people to short-list candidates to the stool was in itself a form of sanction against absolutism.

Admittedly there were occasions when Akyem rulers indulged in acts which on their face value appeared to be, or bordered on, rank tyranny. These occurred mostly in master-

---

1. See p. 88, n. 5, above.

2. Baum (Gyadam) to Basel, 14 July 1857, No. Gyadam 7; Stromberg (Kukurantumi) to Basel, 28 May 1861, No. Akim 8, BMA-PJC.

3. Christaller to Basel, 1 October 1866, No. Akim 22, BMA-PJC. According to Christaller Asase was guilty of extortion, highway robbery, murder (one of his victims was his own wife), seizure and selling of Akyem citizens into slavery, interception of royal letters to and from the coast, and the harassment of royal messengers; in short so bad was his character that at one stage the Abuakwa people demanded his execution, that is to say, Asase killing himself. He eventually committed suicide.

slave relationship. The evidence leaves room for no doubt that slaves and people of servile origins formed a substantial section of Akyem society, though the nature of the evidence makes it impossible to define the size in terms of figures. In the 1730s it was said of the Akyem that of all the peoples in the Gold Coast they were the only group who scarcely sold their prisoners-of-war into the trans-Atlantic slave trade; they grafted the slaves on their families, manumitted them after a time, and made them full members of their household.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this practice, a slave or a person of servile origin, to the native free-born Akyem, was an inferior person and never the equal of the freeborn; he was doomed to carry the stigma of being a slave till the day of his death. As long as he lived a slave, together with all his personal belongings, was the property of his master. If the slave was a woman, her children were the property of her owner who could dispose of her and her children any how, any time, any where.

In Abuakwa the paramount ruler seems to have been the greatest slave-owner. This was most probably the case in Kotoku and Bosome also. In 1875 when the<sup>one</sup>/year-old British Colonial Government abolished domestic slavery in the Gold Coast, Abuakwa was the only place in the eastern sector where it caused the greatest social upheaval owing to the large number of slaves there. Hundreds and hundreds of slaves left; the population of Kyebi, for example, was said to have dramatically and drastically dwindled.<sup>2</sup> The royal household suffered most: the slaves there left almost to a man, with the result

---

1. Romer, Tilforladlig, p. 158.

2. Asante, Mohr, and Wener (Akyem) to the Slave Emancipation Commission of the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast, 26 June 1875, BMA-PJC.

that King Amoako Atta I contemplated resigning his office because there were not enough slaves to accord dignity to his household.<sup>1</sup>

Until then, however, the Abuakwahene could dispose of his slaves in any way he liked. Many of them were often made sacrificial victims whose gore was expected to water the grave of a deceased royal. Abuakwahene Atta Panin was reported to have killed over thirty people in 1856 when the famous Dokuwa died.<sup>2</sup> Several human sacrifices were said to have taken place in 1867 when Abuakwahene Atta Obiwom died.<sup>3</sup> Many of these victims would be royal household slaves, but also included would be any free-born, whether native or stranger, who happened to fall into the hands of the royal executioners. To the Basel missionary personnel resident in Kyebi there could not have been greater proofs of rank tyranny and absolutism.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Eisenschmid (?Akropon, Akuapem) to Basel, 25 June 1875, citing Mohr (Akyem) to Akropon, 28 May 1875, BMA-PJC.
  2. Baum (Gyadam) to Basel, 14 July 1857, No. Gyadam 7, BMA-PJC.
  3. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 7 July 1867, No. Akim 4, BMA-PJC.
  4. Eisenschmid (Kyebi) to Basel, 3 October 1868, No. Akim 10, BMA-PJC.

APPENDIX B

"THE HUMBLE PETITION OF QUABINA FUAH, KING OF INSWAR-MOON  
AND ITS DEPENDENCIES HUMBLY SHOWETH:

(Unedited)

(cf CO 96/88, 1871, Vol 2)

Sir,

The ancestors of your humble petitioner were originally subjects to the Kings of Ashantees but through tyranny and oppression of his conduct towards your humble petitioner's ancestors, fought the King of Ashantees in their way to Akim, and declare independence in the year 1816, in the reign of your humble petitioner's ancestor Kojo Coomah, King of Geddah (now Insar-moon) from Ashantee crown, previous to the arrival of Sir Charles MacArthy.

He was succeeded by Agiman, your humble petitioner's predecessor from the year 1816 to the present time, your humble petitioner's ancestors and predecessors never offended Your Excellency's Government, neither your humble petitioner offended Your Excellency since your humble petitioner's ancestors sworn allegiance to the British Government - and they having become a protectorate to the British Government.

The Ashantees molested Your humble petitioner's subjects daily. That your humble petitioner in exercise and obedience to Your Excellency's command, humbly does represent to Your Excellency the grief, and sorrow your humble petitioner has been undergone for several months since your humble petitioner's five principals of his captains, viz.

Quamin Afultin	}	
Kojo Aboki		
Quamin Dumprey (Jun.)		Cape Coast Jail
Obin Dalco		
Quasi Boar		Accra Jail

were sentenced to imprisonment for such lines of misconduct towards your humble petitioner's protectors (the British Government) for crimes having been committed by them, of which crimes judgement preferred against them, of mis-conducts and misdoings, and were sentenced to imprisonment for several years.

Your humble petitioner is aware of the crimes they have sinned against our British Government of which your humble petitioner is a loyal subject:- although they deserved punishment greater than the present ones, but Her Majesty's throne is a throne of mercy for the offender and the wicked, and Your Excellency's Government is a seat of mercy and justice, holding the one on Your Excellency's right hand for pardoning offences of the wicked, and the left hand for punishment of the wickedness of the times for disobedience.

Your humble petitioner crave earnestly and entreats Your Excellency to pardon and forgive them (the prisoners) for their first offence, and bind them for future obedience of which your humble petitioner doubt not that they will commit such lines of misconducts and more, as their crimes will be a warning to your petitioner's subjects for the future. Your humble petitioner begs to entreat Your Excellency for release. Your humble petitioner and his chiefs humbly brings Your Excellency's observation that the prisoners were imprisoned on account of refusing summons from the Judicial Assessor's Court, but

no other guilty beside their disobedience of refusing summons.

Your humble petitioner and his chiefs had given up the Ashantee captives in his district, by Your Excellency's command and begs humbly to release your humble petitioner's captains from imprisonment.

And as in duty bounds your humble petitioner and his chiefs ever pray.

(Sd) Quabina Fuah

King of Inswar-moon.

Chiefs Marks:

Quabina X Essimen, Chief of Yinasi  
 Quamin X Abanqua, Chief of Formasi  
 Quacoe X Abrooqua, Chief of Insooasoo  
 Quabina X Dumprey, Chief of Imoosasoo  
 Quamin X Eyimpay, Chief of Abanasi  
 Quabina X Apia Agay, Chief of Bancamee  
 Acquassi X Dalco, Chief of Mansu  
 Ambah X Coomah, Queen of Swaidol  
 Quabina X Ampartah Chum of Asuboah  
 Kojo X Moley, Chief of Inswarmoon  
 Yaw X Dumprey, Chief of Inswarmoon  
 Acquassi X Manu, Chief of Inswarmoon  
 Acquassi X Enchee, Chief of Inswarmoon  
 Quacoe X Okoree, Chief of Inswar-moon  
 Cofee X Amanee, Chief of Inswar-moon  
 Quacoe X Tooda, Chief of Inswar-moon  
 Quamin X Accon Ennee, Chief of Inswar-moon  
 CofeeX Tettay, Chief of Inswar-moon  
 Cofee X Kessi (interpreter)  
 Quabina X Saikee, Chief of Inswar-moon

Acquassi X Effom, Chief of Inswar-moon  
Cofee X Asail, Chief of Inswar-moon

Inswar-moon, 17 July 1871

True copy

(Sd) Salmon

(Ag. Administrator)

APPENDIX CABUAKWA RULERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

TRADITIONAL	REVISED
(After Reindorf & Danquah)	(In the light of European sources)
1. Ofori Panin, c.1733.	1. Ofori <u>[Panin]</u> , c.1704-1727.
2. Baa Kwante, died 1742	2. Baa Kwante, 1727-1742.
3. Pobi (1743)	3. Pobi, 1742-1765.
4. Owusu Akyem	4. Obirikoran, 1765-1784.
5. Twum Ampoforo (deposed and killed).	5. Ampofo or Ampofro <u>[Twum]</u> , 1784-94.
6. Obirikorane, died 1770.	6. Apraku, 1794-1807.
7. Apraku, died 1770.	7. Atta Owusu, 1807-1811.
8. Atta Wusu Yiakosan, died 1811.	8. Asare Bediako, suicide 1811.
9. Asare Bediako, suicide 1811.	9. Kofi Asante, 1811-1816.
10. Kofi Asante, died 1811.	10. Dokuwa or Dokuaa, 1817-1842. (Abdicated).
11. Twum II	11. Atta Panin, 1842-1858.
12. Queen Dokua (reigned from 1817.	12. Atta Obiwom, 1858-1867.
13. Atta Panin	13. Amoako Atta I, 1867-1887.
14. Atta Obiwom, died 1866.	14. Amoako Atta II, 1887-1911.
15. Amoako Atta I, 1866-1888.	
16. Amoako Atta II, 1888-1911.	



APPENDIX DKOTOKU KING LIST TO 1876

TRADITIONAL (After Ex-Kotokuhene, Frempon Manso III)	TENTATIVELY REVISED LIST (Reindorf and contemporary sources)
1. Yarawere	1. Yarawere
2. Boadi Nianim	2. Boadi Nianim
3. Akrofi Brempon	3. Akrofi Brempon
4. Asiedu Apenten	4. Asiedu Apenten, died c.1701
5. Ofosuhene Apenten	5. Ofosuhene Apenten, c.1701- 1717
6. Frempon Manso	6. Frempon Manso, 1717-1740
7. Ampem	7. Apaw, 1740-1742
8. Kwahene Broni	8. Ampem
9. Gyamrankum	9. Broni
10. Kakari Apaw	10. Gyamrankum, died ?1744
11. Opoku	11. Kotoku Ampoma, ?1745-?1797
12. Kwakye Adeyefe	12. Opoku, 1798-1807
13. Kwadwo Kuma	13. Kwakye Adeyefe, 1807-1812 (Fled his office)
14. Affrifah Akwada	14. Kwadwo Kuma, 1812-1816
15. (Abontendomhene as Regent)	15. Amoako, as Regent, 1817-1823
16. Kofi Agyeman	16. Affrifah Akwada, 1823-1824
17. Kwabena Fua	17. Kofi Agyeman, 1825-1867
18. Atta Fua I died 1926	18. Kwabena Fua, 1867-1876
	19. Atta Fua I, 1876 -

APPENDIX EBOSOME RULERS TO c.1876: TRADITIONAL LIST<sup>1</sup>

1. Mpim
2. Ntiamoa Panin
3. Boampadu
4. Oware Agyekum I
5. Kesse Taa
6. Ntow Kroko
7. Bosompem Ntow
8. Akrasi Panin
9. Koragye Ampaw
10. Kwame Marfo
11. Amma Amoakooa<sup>2</sup>
12. Kofi Ahenkora, 1877-

---

1. The virtual absence of contemporary documentary sources has not made it possible to attempt a close check on the traditional list. But the list seems to be incomplete, as suggested by the term 'Panin' (meaning the Elder or First) attached to Ntiamoa and Akrasi.

2. In 1874 Butler reported that the Bosomehene was called Kofi Ahenkora.

BIBLIOGRAPHYPRIMARY SOURCES: ARCHIVALA. BRITISH, (Public Records Office, London (PRO):

## T 70/ Series :-

T 70/50	Letters from Africa,	1685-1698
51	" " "	1698-1703
52	" " "	1703-1715
53	" " "	1720-1728
54	" " "	1728-1740
T 70/29	Inward Letters from Africa,	1751-1753
30	" " " "	1753-1762
31	" " " "	1762-1773
32	" " " "	1773-1781
33	" " " "	1781-1799
34	" " " "	1799-1806
35	" " " "	1807-1813
36	" " " "	1813-1818
40	" " " "	1816-1818 Mission to Asante
42	" " " "	April-September 1817
T 70/1515 - T 70/1586 Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1726-1807		
T 70/974	Accra Day-books,	1752-1755
974 <sup>A</sup>	" " "	1756-1758
977-8	" " "	1762-1765
979	" " "	1759-1761
978-984	" " "	1768-1818
T 70/1007 - T 70/1107, Cape Coast Castle Day-books, 1752-1815		
T 70/1468	Diary of Richard Miles,	1777-1778

T 70/1479 Letters to and from Richard Miles, 1750-1792  
 T 70/1182 Apam Day-book, 1784

C0 Series :-

C0 98/1<sup>A</sup> Minutes of the Council of Merchants,  
 CCC, 1829-1844

C0 96/1 Correspondence between CCC and Elmina  
 Castle, 1853-1856

2 Correspondence between CCC and the  
 Colonial Office 1842-1843

C0 96/4 - C0 96/16 Correspondence between CCC & C0, 1844-1849

96/18- C0 96/19	"	"	"	"	1850
/22 - /23	"	"	"	"	1851
25	"	"	"	"	1852
27 - 28	"	"	"	"	1853
30 - 31	"	"	"	"	1854
33 - 34	"	"	"	"	1855
38 - 39	"	"	"	"	1856
41	"	"	"	"	1857
43 - 44	"	"	"	"	1858
45	"	"	"	"	1859
47	"	"	"	"	1860 Jan.- June
48	"	"	Freeman & Governor		1860 August.
49	"	"	CCC & C0, 1860 July -		December.
53 - 55	"	"	"	"	1861
57 - 58	"	"	"	"	1862
60 - 62	"	"	"	"	1863
63 - 64	"	"	"	"	1864
65 & 67 - 68	"	"	"	"	1865
70 - 72	"	"	"	"	1866

74		"	"	"	"	1867
76 -	77	"	"	"	"	1868
79 -	81	"	"	"	"	1869
84 -	85	"	"	"	"	1870
87 -	89	"	"	"	"	1871
92 -	94	"	"	"	"	1872
96 -	103	"	"	"	"	1873
111 -	112	"	"	"	"	1874
115 -	116	"	"	"	"	1875
CO 96/73	Individual Despatches					1866
78		"	"			1868
108 -	110	"	"			1873
114		"	"			1874
CO 96/356 - 357	Correspondence between CCC & CO,					1900
374		"	"	"	"	1900
CO 402/1	Entry Books					1847
/2-3		"	"			1847-1852
/4		"	"			1852-1857
CO 267/117	Merchant Despatches from the GC,					1832
126	"	"	"	"	"	1834
131	"	"	"	"	"	1835
136	"	"	"	"	"	1836
144	"	"	"	"	"	1837
150	"	"	"	"	"	1838
162	"	"	"	"	"	1840
168	"	"	"	"	"	1841
CO 267/170	Dr Madden's Report on the GC etc.					1841-1843

British Parliamentary Papers (BPP):

Select Committee Report on West Africa,	1842
---	------

Select Committee Report on West Africa,	1865
Corres. Relating to the Ashantee Invasion,	1873 Vol. xLix
Further Corres. Relating to " "	1874 Vol. xLvi
Corres. Relating to the Fante Confederation,	1873 Vol. xLix

B. DANISH: Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen :-

Documents of the Danish West India and Guinea Company  
(VgK) etc.:

Breve og Dokumenter inkomme og udgaade,	1683-4, 1689, & 1698-1705 (Ipakt)
" " " "	1705-1722 (Ipkt)
" " " "	1722-1750
Dag-journaler fort paa Christiansborg Castle, Osu,	1688-1705
Sekretprotokoller " " "	1723-1754
Diarieboger " " "	1744-1754
Diverse arkivalier fra Guinea (DAFG),	1806, 1811-1813
Guineiske Journaler (GJ)	1755-1768
Sager til Guineiske Journaler (STGJ)	1806, 1808-1817, 1819-1820
Guineiske Journaler Vol. A,	1799-1804
" " B,	1804-1820
" " C,	1821-1827
" " D,	1828-1830
" " E,	1831-1834
" " F,	1835-1840
" " G,	1841-1844
" " H,	1845-1846
" " I,	1847-1850
Sager til Guineiske Journaler,	1776-1849
" " " "	1850-1893

Departementen for udenrigske anliggender (DFUA), 1804-1847

C. DUTCH: Rijksarchief, The Hague; Balm Library, Legon :-

(i) The Furley Collections, Legon:

Dutch Records, Blue Books, I - 7	1610-1657
Dutch and other European Records	1658-1644,
	1665-1679,
	1680-1700.
Letters and Papers from Guinea	1699-1720
Miscellaneous Records	1699-1811
Dutch Documents, WIC, transl. by E.F. Collins,	1700-1780
WIC 124 <sup>A</sup> Journals and correspondence	1810-1816
Diaries and correspondence	1815-1823
" " "	1830-1847

(ii) Govr.-Gen. H.W. Daendel's Journal &

Correspondence 1815-1817

(iii) A. van Danzig's Dutch Documents Relating to

the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast, Pt.I, 1860-1710

Pt.II, 1710-1740,  
Legon.

With the exception of Van Danzig's, all the Dutch sources consulted in Ghana were cross-checked with the originals at The Hague. Consequently the original references are cited, e.g. WIC or NBKG.

D. GERMAN: Basel Mission Archives :-

Basel Mission Gold Coast Correspondence, c. 1844-1888

(Abstracts by Paul Jenkins (Legon, 1970), Balm Library, Legon.

E. MISCELLANEOUS PRIMARY SOURCES:

- i. Reports on Land Disputes in the Adansi Division of Ashanti (Obusai District) L 448.
- ii. Stool Lands Boundaries Settlement (Akwamu Order), in Gold Coast Gazette Extraordinary, No. 6, 1956
- iii. Akyem Abuakwa Stool Lands Declaration, May 1939
- iv. Nsawam Native Affairs, Case No. 76/191, Ghana National Archives.
- v. Documents Relating to Akyem Settlements in and Claims to Asante-Akyem, File No. D 46, Kumasi Archives.

F. NEWSPAPERS:

London Times, 26 October 1861

African Times, 24 October 1870

West African Herald, 31 March 1871

G. ORAL TRADITIONS:

- i. Akyem Abuakwa Traditions (AAT), gathered under the auspices of Okyenhene Nana Ofori Atta I during the 1925/6 period.
- ii. Akyem Abuakwa traditions, collected by author in 1968/9.
- iii. Akyem Bosome Traditions (ABT), compiled for author by Bosomehene Nana Oware Agyekum II, 1968/9.
- iv. Akyem Kotoku Traditions (AKT), gathered by author in 1968/9.
- v. Asante-Akyem Traditions (As-AkT), collected by author, 1968/9.
- vi. K. Ameyaw, Akim Oda (Kotoku) Tradition, IAS acc. No. KAG/7
  - " Asamankese Tradition, IAS acc. No. KAG/4
  - " Akwatia Tradition, IAS acc. No. KAG/2.



- vii. K. Y. Daaku, Oral Traditions of Adanse (Legon, 1969)  
" Oral Traditions of Assin-Twifo (Legon, 1969)  
" Oral Traditions of Denkyera (Legon, 1970)

PRIMARY SOURCES: PRINTED.

- Astley, T. A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels, London, 1745, Vols. I & II.
- Barbot, J. "A Description of the coast of North and South Guinea", in Churchill, Collections of Voyages and Travels, London 1732.
- Beecham, J. Ashantee and the Gold Coast, London 1841.
- Biorn, A.R. Beretning om de Danske Forter og Negerier paa Guineakysten, Copenhagen, 1788.
- Bosman, J. A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, London 1705, 1967 ed.
- Bowdich, T.E., A Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, London 1819.
- Brackenbury, H., The Ashanti War, 2 Vols., London 1874.
- Burton, R.F. & Cameron, V.L., To the Gold Coast for Gold, London 1883.
- Butler, W.F., Akim-Foo, A Narrative of a Failure, London 1875.
- Dapper, O., Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche (Amsterdam, 1668), adapted in Ogilby, J. Africa being an accurate description etc., London 1670.
- Christaller, J.G., A Dictionary of Asante and Fante Language called Tshi, Basel, 1881, 1933 ed.
- Crooks, J.J., Records Relating to the Gold Coast Settlements from 1750-1874, Dublin, 1923.
- Cruickshank, B., Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast, London 1853.
- Duncan, J., Travels in West Africa, 1845-1846, London 1846.
- Dupuis, J., Journal of a Residence in Ashantee, London 1824.
- Ellis, A.B., The Land of Fetish, London 1883.
- " " The Tshi Speaking People of the Gold Coast, London 1887.
- " " A History of the Gold Coast of West Africa, London 1893.
- Freeman, T.B., Journal of Two Visits to the Kingdom of Ashanti, London 1843.
- Isert, P.E., Voyage en Guinea, Paris, 1783.
- Horton, J.A.B., West African Countries and Peoples, London 1868.
- " " Letters on the Political Conditions of the Gold Coast, London 1870, 1970 ed.

- Hutton, W., *A Voyage to Africa*, London 1821.
- Meredith, H., *An Account of the Gold Coast of Africa*, London, 1812.
- Metcalf, G.E., *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*, Suffolk 1964.
- Ramseyer, F.A. & Kuhne, J., *Four Years in Ashantee*, London 1897.
- Reade, W.W., *The African Sketch-Book*, London 1873, 2 Vols.
- Reindorf, C.C., *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, Basel, 1895.
- Romer, L.F., *Tilforladelig Efterretning on Kysten Guinea*, Copenhagen, 1760, transl. (parts) by K. Bertelsen, IAS, Legon 1965.
- Samson, E., *A Short History of Akuapem and Akropong, and Autobiography*, Accra, 1900.
- Thonning, P., *Kort de danske Besiddelser, Guinea* 1802.
- Villault, S., *Abstract of a Voyage to the coast of Africa and Guinea in 1666*, in Astley, Collections, Vol. II.

#### SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Agbodeka, F., *African Politics and British Policy in the Gold Coast, 1868 - 1900*, NUP, 1971.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., & Crowder, M., (ed.), *History of West Africa*, 2 Vols., London 1971.
- Ajayi, J.F.A., & Espie, I., (ed.), *A Thousand Years of West African History*, London 1966.
- Akinjogbin, I.A., *Dahomey and Its Neighbours, 1708-1818*, CUP, 1967.
- Akuffo, B.S., *Ahemfie Adesua*, Exeter 1950.
- Anonymous, *Native Reports in Tshi (Twi Kasa mu Akuapem ne Eho Nsem anase Abasem)*, Akropon, 1913.
- Balmer, Rev. W.T., *A History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast*, London & Cape Coast, 1926.
- Blake, W.J., *European Beginnings in West Africa*, London, 1937.
- Boahen, A.A., *Topics in West African History*, London, 1966.
- Boateng, E.A., *A Geography of Ghana*, CUP. 1959.
- Bourret, F.M., *The Gold Coast*, OUP, 1954.

- Busia, K.A., *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, London 1951.
- Casely-Hayford, J.E., *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, London 1970 ed.
- Christensen, J.B., *Double Descent Among the Fante*, New Haven, 1954.
- Claridge, W.W., *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, 2 Vols. London, 1915.
- Coombs, D., *The Gold Coast, Britain and the Netherlands*, OUP 1963.
- Daaku, K.Y., *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720*, OUP 1970.
- Danquah, J.B., *Akim Abuakwa Handbook*, London 1928.
- " " *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs and the Akim Abuakwa Constitution*, London 1928.
- " " *An Objectified History of Akim Abuakwa*, London 1938.
- " " *The Akan Doctrine of God*, London 1944.
- Davies, K.G., *The Royal African Company*, London 1957.
- Debrunner, H.W., *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, London 1967.
- Dickson, K.B., *A Historical Geography of Ghana*, CUP 1969.
- Dike, O., *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885*, OUP, 1956.
- Fage, J.D., *A History of West Africa*, CUP 1969 ed.
- Field, M.J., *Akim-Kotoku: An Oman of the Gold Coast*, London 1948.
- Forde, D. & Kaberry, P.M. (ed.), *West African Kingdoms of the Nineteenth Century*, OUP 1967.
- Fuller, F., *A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti*, London, 1921.
- Fynn, J.K., *Asante and Its Neighbours, 1700-1807*, NUP 1971.
- Hargreaves, J.D., *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa*, London 1967.
- Hill, Polly, *The Gold Coast Farmer*, OUP 1956.
- " " *The Migrant Cocoa Farmer of Southern Ghana*, OUP 1963.
- Kani, T. Yao, *Akanfoo Amammere*, Accra 1951.

- Kimble, D., *A Political History of Ghana, 1850-1928*, OUP 1963.
- Kyerematen, A.A., *Panoply of Ghana*, London 1964.
- Kwamena-Poh, M.A., *Government and Politics in the Akuapem State, 1730-1850*, NUP 1973.
- Larsen, K., *De Danske i Guinea*, Copenhagen 1918.
- Macdonald, G., *The Gold Coast Past and Present*, London 1898.
- McEwan, P.J.M. (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Africa*, London 1968.
- Mensah Sarbah, J., *Fanti Customary Law*, London 1897.
- " " " *Fanti National Constitution*, London 1906.
- Metcalf, G.E., *Maclean of the Gold Coast*, London 1963.
- Meyerowitz, E.L.R., *Akan Traditions of Origins*, London 1952.
- " " *The Sacred State of the Akan*, London 1951.
- Nketia, J.H., *Drumming in the Akan Communities of Ghana*, London 1963.
- Norregaard, G., *Danish Settlements in West Africa, 1658-1850*, Boston, 1966.
- Ofori Atta II (Okyenhehene Nana) *Odwira Festival*, Kyebi, 1949.
- Priestley, M. *West African Trade and Coast Politics*, London 1969.
- Rattray, R.S., *Ashanti*, Oxford 1923.
- " " *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Oxford 1929.
- Reynolds, E., *Trade and Economic Change in the Gold Coast, 1807-1874*, NUP 1974.
- Smith, Noel, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1835-1960*, London 1966.
- Sutherland, D. Afua, *State Emblems of the Gold Coast*, Accra 1954.
- Vansina, J., et al. (ed.) *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, OUP 1964.
- Ward, W.E.F., *A History of Ghana*, London, 1969 ed.
- Welman, C.W., *The Native States of the Gold Coast*, London 1925.
- Wilks, I., *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, London 1975.

ARTICLES:

- Addo-Fening, R. The background to the deportation of King Asafo Agyei and the foundation of New Dwaben, THSG, Vol. XIV No. 2 (1973).
- " " " The Pax Britannica and Akyem Abuakwa, c.1874-1904, in Universitas (Legon), Vol. 3 No. 3, June 1974.
- Adams, C.D. Activities of Danish Botanists in Guinea, THSG Vol. III Part I, 1957.
- Agbodeka, F., The Fanti Confederacy, 1865-1869, THSG Vol. VIII 1964.
- Agyeman-Duah, Mampong Ashanti: A Traditional History, THSG, Vol. IV Part 2, 1960.
- Amenumey, D.E.K., Geraldo de Lima: A Reappraisal, THSG Vol. IX 1968.
- Ameyaw, K., Kwahu, an Early Forest State, GNQ, No. 9, 1966.
- Boahen, A.A., The Origins of the Akan, GNQ No. 9, 1966.
- " " Arcany or Accany or Arcania and the Accanists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries\* European Records, THSG Vol. XIV Part i 1973.
- Collins, E., The Panic Element in Nineteenth Century British Relations with Ashanti, THSG Vol. V Part II 1962.
- Coombs, D., The Place of the Certificate of Apology in Ghanaian History, THSG Vol. III Part iii 1958.
- Daaku, K.Y., The European Traders and the Gold Coast States, 1630-1720, THSG Vol. VIII 1965.
- " " Pre-Ashanti States, GNQ No. 9 1966.
- Debrunner, H.W., Notable Danish Chaplains on the Gold Coast, TGCTHS VOL. II Part i 1956.
- Dickson, K.B., The Development of Road Transport in Southern Ghana and Ashanti since 1850, THSG Vol. V Part i 1961.
- Fage, J.D., The Administration of George Maclean on the Gold Coast, TGCTHS Vol. I Part iv.
- Fynn, J.K. The Rise of Ashanti, GNQ No. 9 1966.
- " " Akim Abuakwa Kings of the eighteenth century: a Chronology, Seminar Paper, Dept. of History, Legon.
- " " The Reign and Times of Kusi Obodum, in the THSG, Vol. XIII.

- Gray, R., Portuguese Musketeers on the Zambezi, J.A.H. Vol. XII No. 4 1971.
- Gordon, J., Some Oral Traditions of Denkyera, TGCTHS Vol. I Part iii 1953.
- Jenkins, P., Twentieth Century Abuakwa Politics in the light of Nineteenth Century Basel Mission Records - Questions about the Role of the Youngmen, Seminar Paper, Legon, 1971.
- " " A Conflict of Faiths at Kukurantumi, THSG XIII Pt. ii.
- Johnson, Marion, Ashanti East of the Volta, THSG Vol. VIII, 19
- " " Migrants' Progress, BGGA Vol. 9 No. 2 1964.
- Jones, D.H., Problems of African Chronology, J.A.H. XI No. 2, 1970.
- Kea, R., Akwamu-Anlo Relations, 1750-1813, THSG X 1969.
- " " Firearms and warfare in the Gold and Slave Coast from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries, in J.A.H., XII No. 2 1971.
- Kumah, J.K., The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Denkyera, GNQ No. 9, 1966.
- Kwamena-Poh, M.A., "The Emergence of Akwampem State: 1730-1850, in GNQ No. 11 (1970).
- Metcalf, G.E., Some aspects of British Gold Coast policy in mid-nineteenth century, TGCTHS Vol. I Part v 1955.
- Ozanne, P., "Ghand", in Shinnie P. (ed.), The African Iron Age, Oxford 1971.
- Priestley M. & Wilks, I.G., Ashanti Kings in the eighteenth century, a Revised Chronology, JAH I No. I 1960.
- Priestley, M., Richard Brew: eighteenth century trader at Anomabo, THSG X 1969.
- " " The Ashanti Question and the British: eighteenth century origins, J.A.H. Vol. 2 1961.
- Rodney, W., Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast, THSG Vol. X 1969.
- Swanzy, H., A Trading Family in nineteenth/Gold Coast, THSG Vol. II Part ii 1956.
- Tenkorang, S., The Importance of Firearms in the struggle between Ashanti and the Coastal States, THSG Vol. ix 1968.

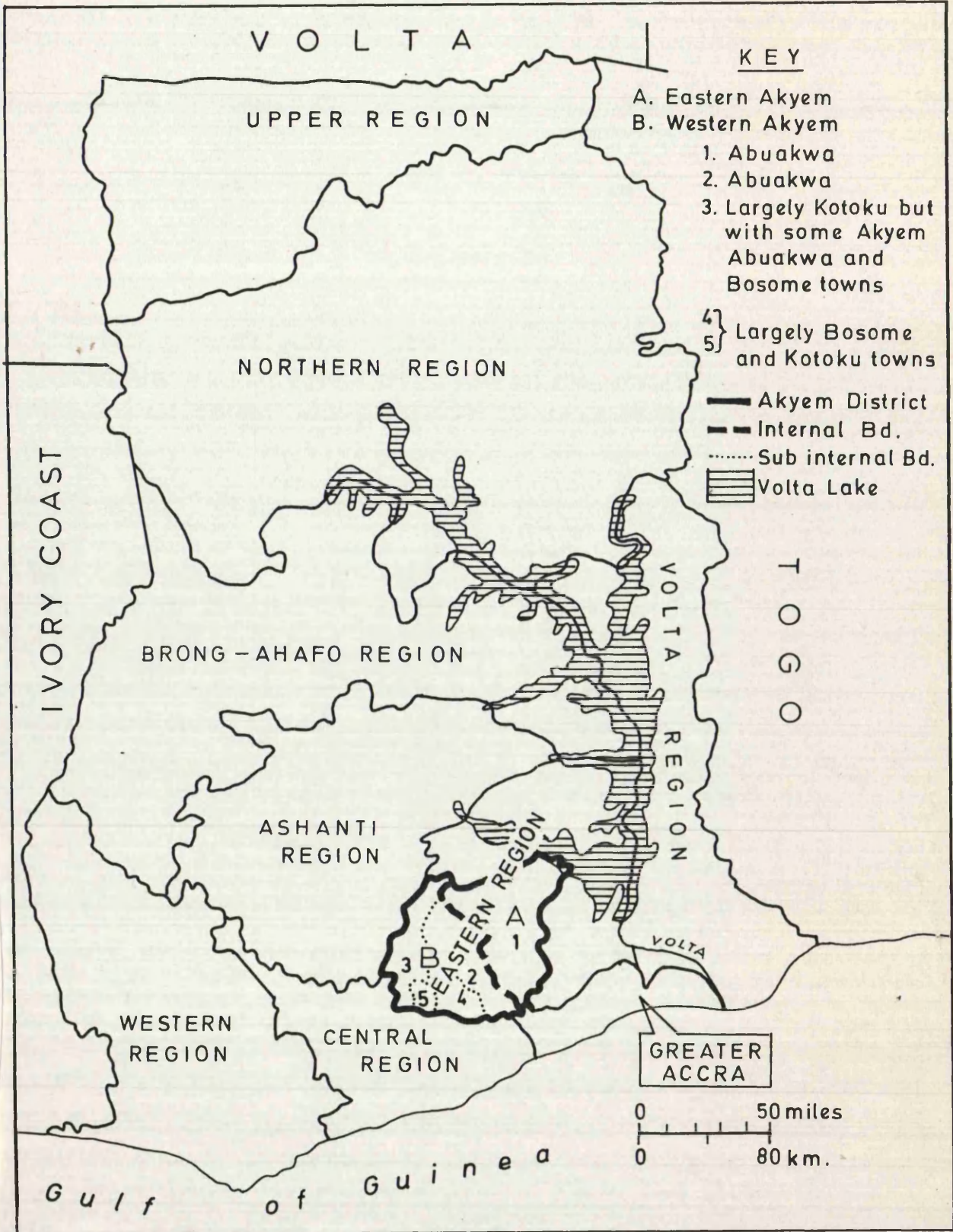
- Wallis, J.R., The Kwahus - Their Connection with the Afram Plains, in TGCTHS, Vol. 1 (1952-1953).
- Wilks, I., The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710, THSG Vol. III Part ii 1957.
- " A Note on Twifo and Akwamu, THSG III Pt. iii 1958.
- " Danish Settlements in West Africa, a Review, J.A.H. Vol. IX 1968.
- Wolfson, Freda, A Price Agreement on the Gold Coast - the Krdbo Oil Boycott, 1858-1866, in Economic History Reivew, 1953 Vol. VI No. 1.

UNPUBLISHED THESIS:

- Amenumey, D.E.K., The Ewe People and the Coming of European Rule, M.A., London 1964.
- Tenkorang, S., British Slave Trading Activities on the Gold and Slave Coasts in the eighteenth century and their Effects on African Society, M.A. London 1964.
- Wolfson, F., British Relations with the Gold Coast, 1843-1880, Ph.D., London 1950.
- Kea, R.A., Trade, State Formation and Warfare in the Gold Coast, 1600-1826, Ph.D., London 1974.



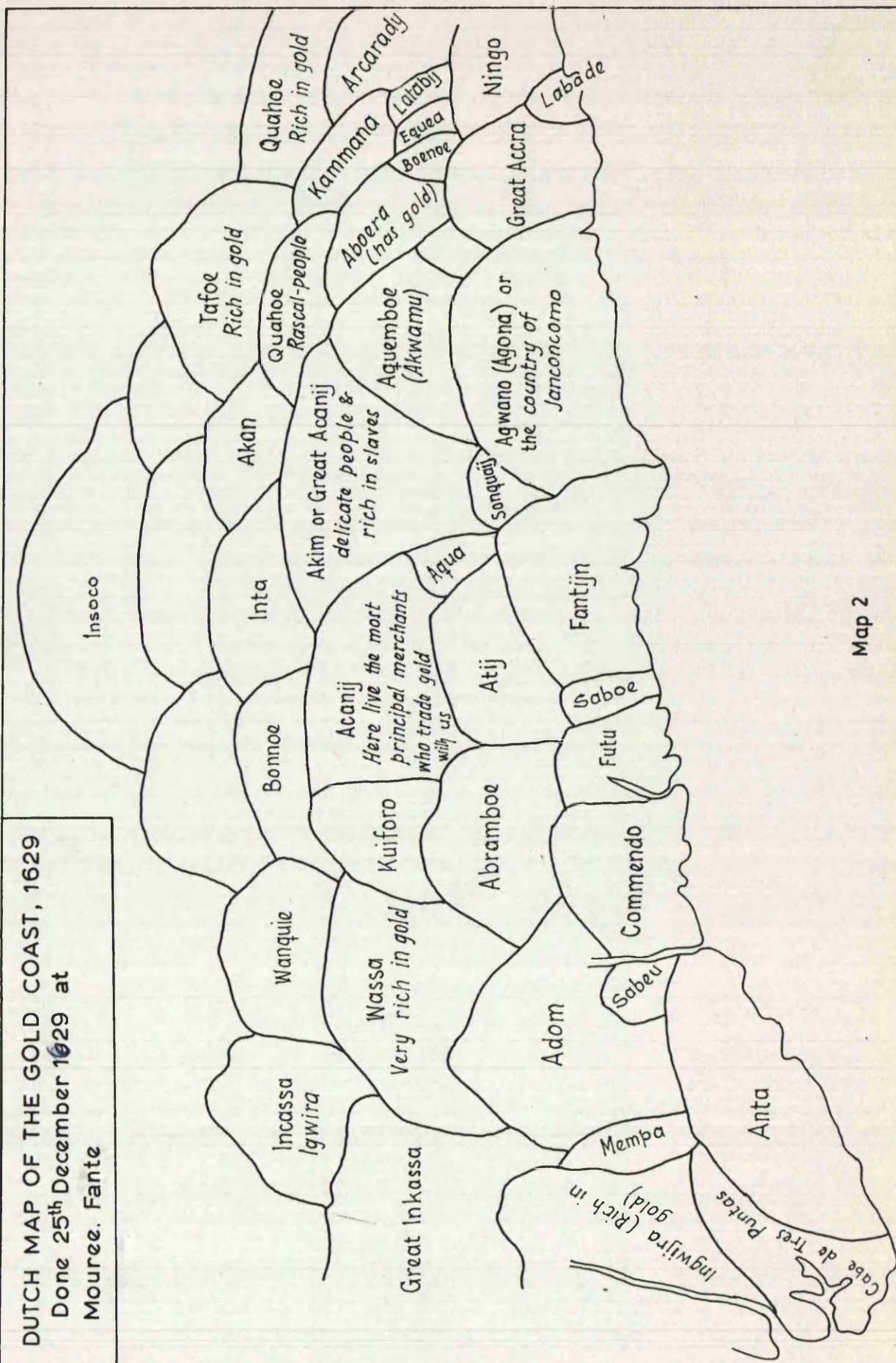
# MODERN GHANA THE AKYEM DISTRICT



Map 1



DUTCH MAP OF THE GOLD COAST, 1629  
 Done 25<sup>th</sup> December 1629 at  
 Mouree. Fante



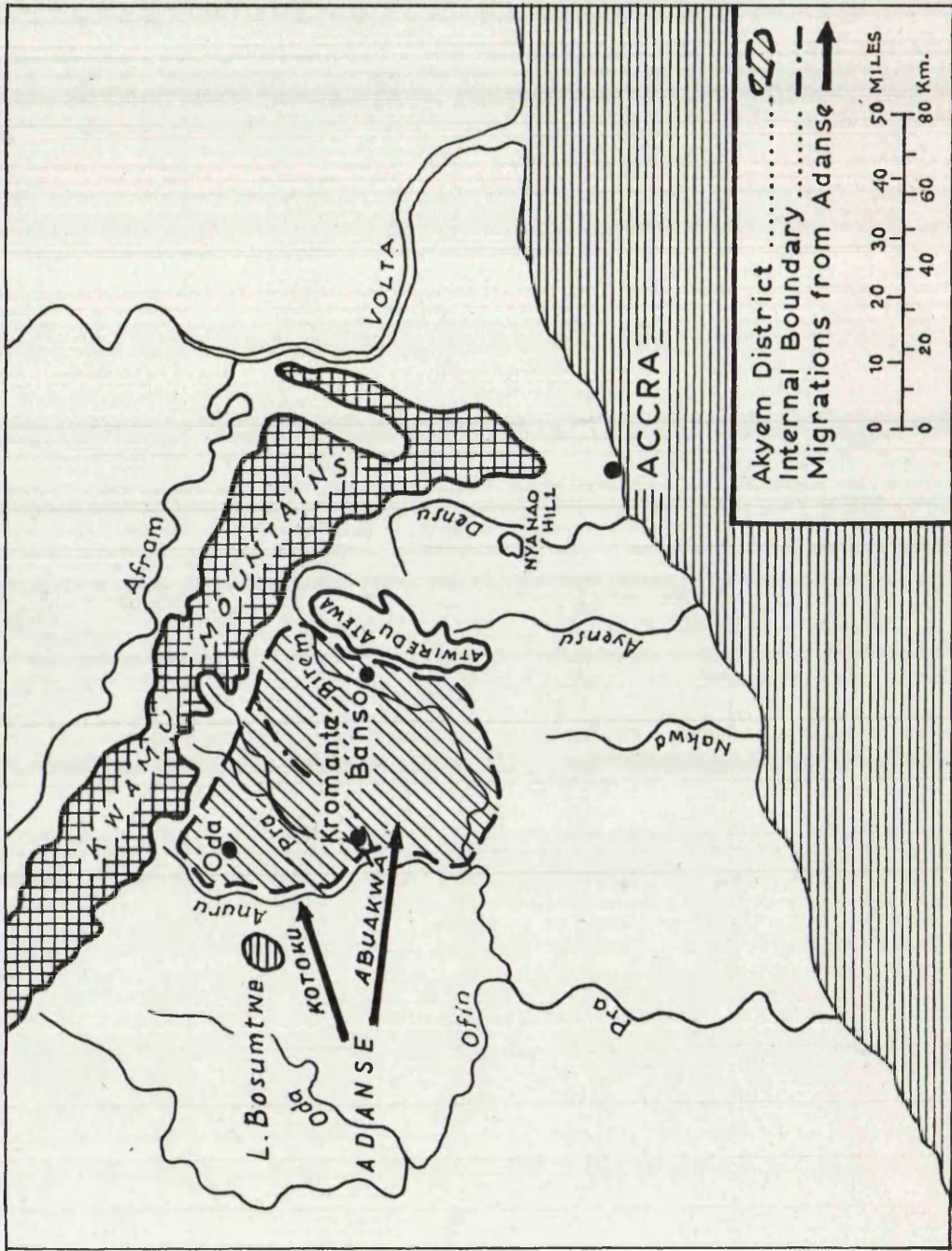
Map 2







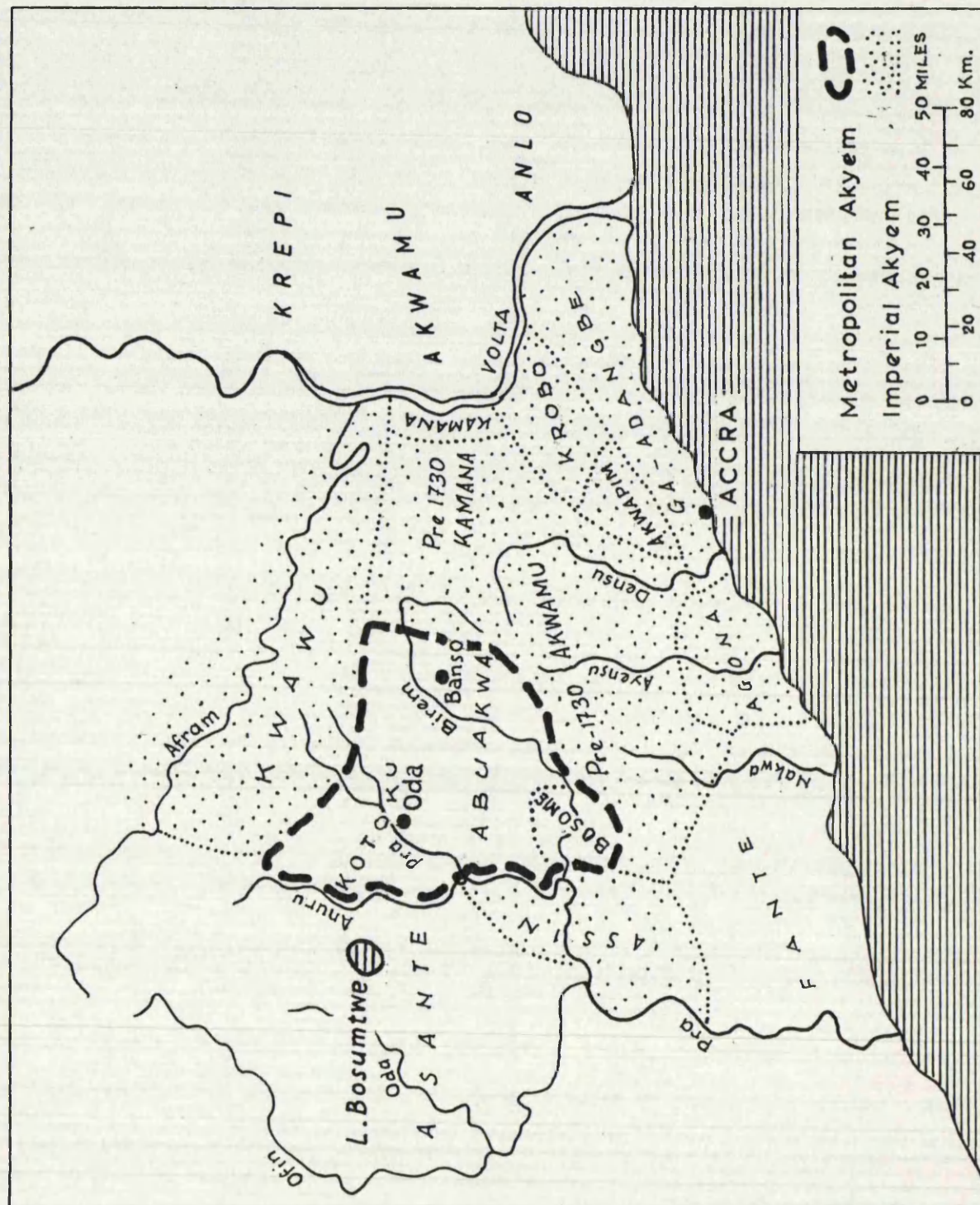
APPROX. LIMIT OF ABUAKWA & KOTOKU  
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY



Map 4

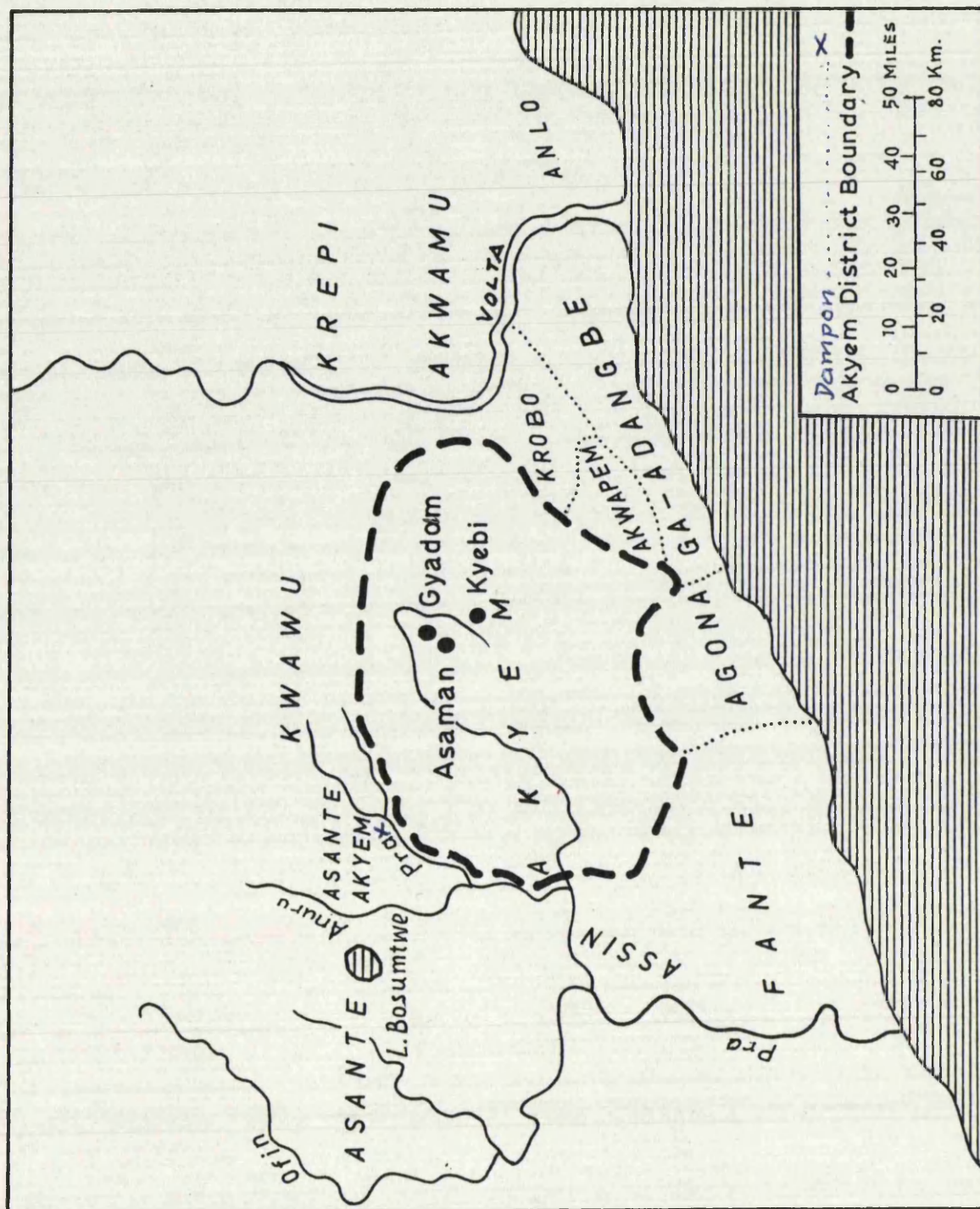


## APPROX. LIMIT OF THE POLITICAL EXPANSION OF AKYEM, 1730 - 1742





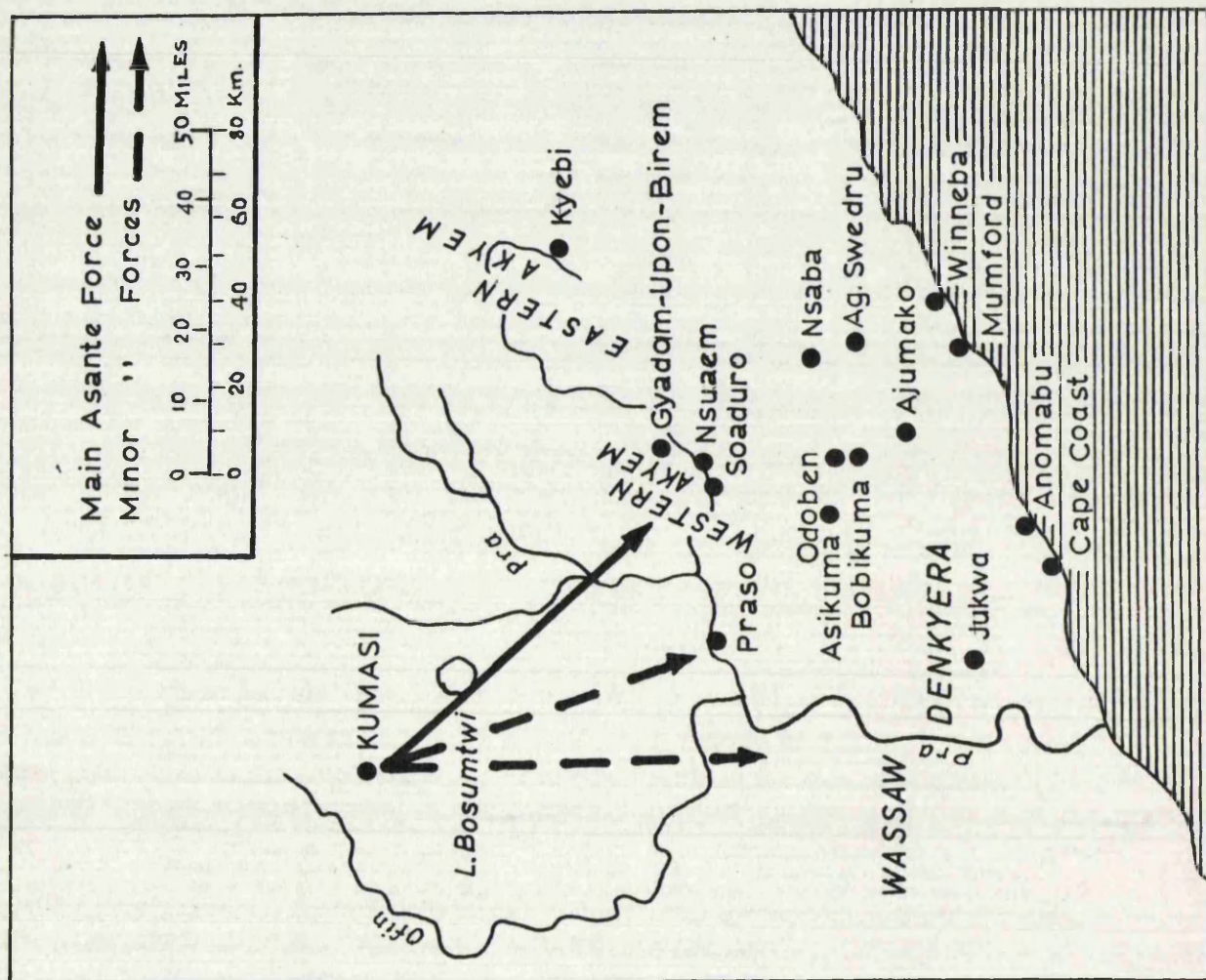
APPROX. EXTENT OF AKYEM DISTRICT AFTER 1831



Map 6



## KOTOKU - ASANTE WAR OF 1863



Map 7



